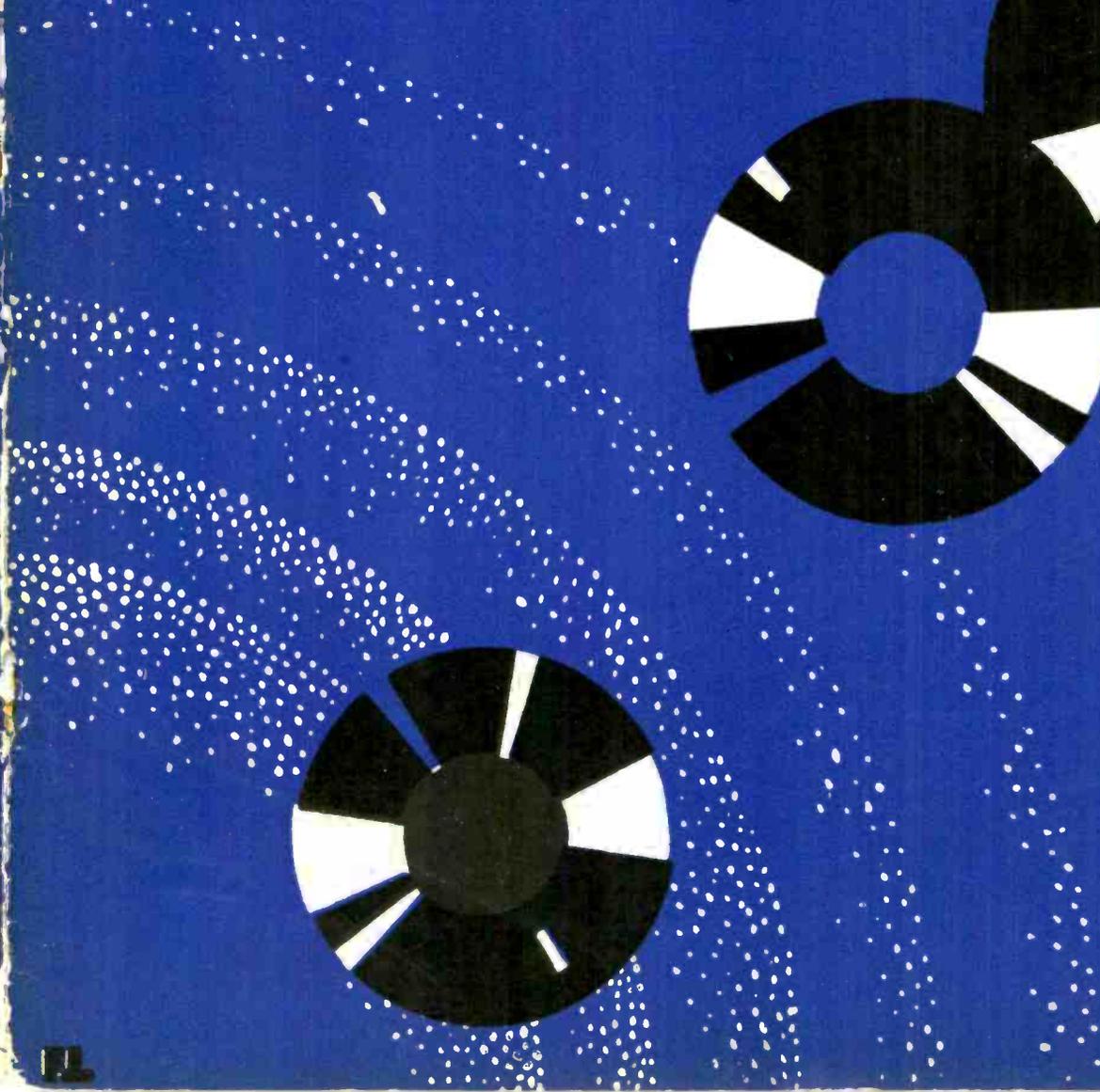


The **GRAMOPHONE**

edited by
Compton Mackenzie
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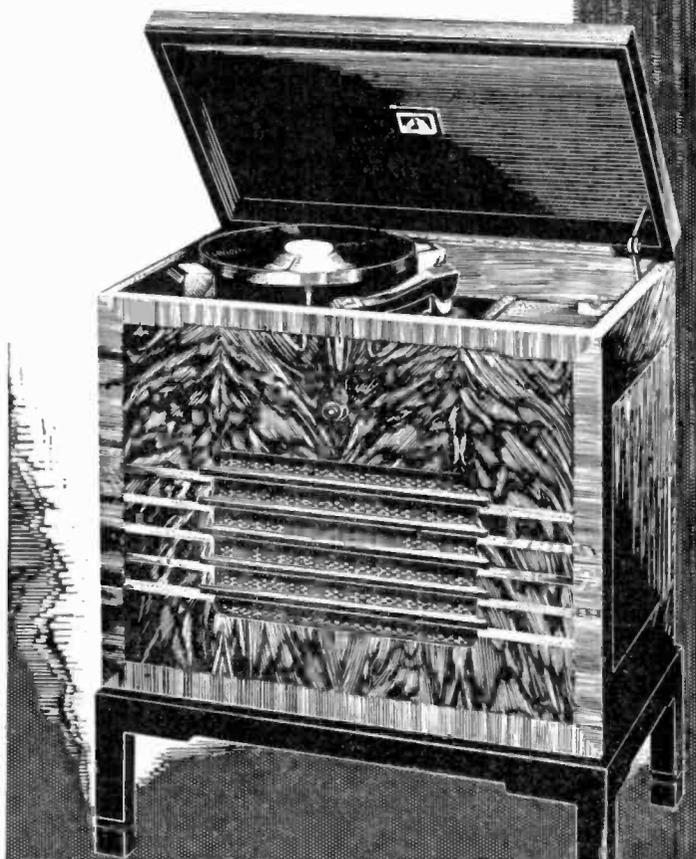
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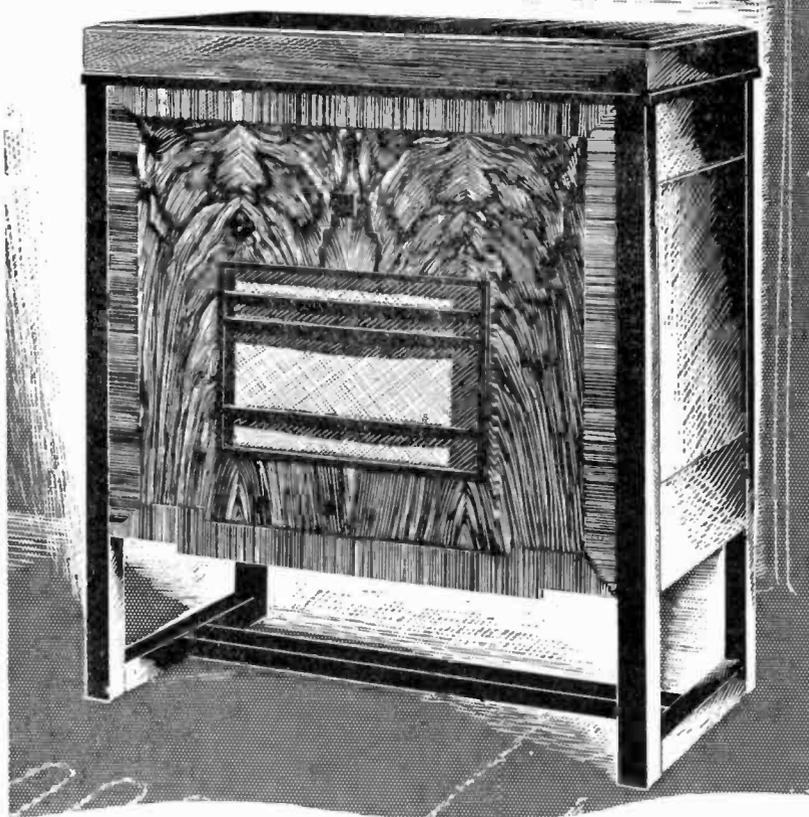
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MARCH 1935

No. 142

EDITORIAL

Long-horns

I might begin the editorial this month with a variant on Kipling's "Road to Mandalay" and sing:

"By the old Balmain pagoda,
Looking eastward to the sea."

Certainly many months have gone by since I was in the same mood of empirical interest as I have been enjoying recently. The cause of this has been the arrival of Mr. Davey's Mark Xb instrument with over-size horn measuring $33\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and the fitting of my Cascade instrument with the new tone-arm set in mercury. On that I am still using the soundbox Mr. Ginn sent for it last year, but it is presently to be fitted with one of his new Dynamic soundboxes, which according to Mr. W. W. Bond, the designer of the Cascade, are the best to show off his straight-horn instrument. On top of that Mr. Ginn himself has written that some time ago he designed a horn with a 36-inch diameter, and offers to send me one as soon as my Expert Senior reaches Barra from the mainland. Finally, our old friend Mr. Hanbury of Banbury, besides mentioning the outsize Expert horn, practically challenges me to give up romantic fibre and return to the merciless realism of steel. In fact, it would only have required the arrival of Mr. P. Wilson with four Vitz soundboxes in each pocket, and his own special fibre clipper, to set the calendar back eight years and more. In the circumstances I shall have to wait a year, that is to say until my new house is built, my records are within reach again, and a large enough room ready to try out these three mighty instruments, before I can make a comparison between them that can be of genuine service. For the moment I must put the Expert Senior on one side, that being unavailable, and say that the struggle for supremacy between those two buffaloes, the over-size horn Mark Xb and the outsize horn Cascade, must rest finally on the same preference that in old days inclined to what I called a romantic or a realistic soundbox. The Mark Xb is a highly perfected example of the former, the Cascade of the latter. That does not mean that the Mark Xb falsifies the tone to achieve a more luscious sound than nature any more than it means that the Cascade sacrifices lusciousness to ruthless phonography. The claim of the Cascade to be called realistic is the success with which the repro-

duction avoids the slightest suggestion that it is coming out of a horn at all. That was the success of the old Balmain, whose forwardness of tone was a revelation in those days. Yet, really I have no right to be saying anything in this matter until I can test the three leading acoustical instruments against one another with pre-electric recordings. The amplification of the human voice nowadays, though the evil practice has been considerably curtailed of late, no longer makes the vocal record infallible as a test of actuality. Many readers will remember the pleasure, I might say excitement, they enjoyed at those tests of ours once upon a time when a large audience awarded marks to as many as a dozen competing instruments. I must confess I should greatly like to hear a carefully chosen programme contested by the three leading long-horns before a select audience of fifty. Rumour says that Mr. P. Wilson prefers the Cascade for acoustical reproduction, and I hope I shall not annoy him if I suggest that this may be primarily due to the refreshing contrast that the Cascade provides to the electrical reproduction in which he and his potentiometer are now immersed. Of one thing only am I completely certain at this moment, which is that the really passionate devotee of the gramophone for a long time to come will get more pleasure out of his instrument if it is acoustical, and I am even going to add hand-wound, than if it is electrical. This is not a question of sour grapes. I challenge any reader who possesses the finest electrical gramophone obtainable to capture the spirit of the music as successfully as the owner of a Mark Xb, an Expert Senior, or a Cascade.

Fibre or Steel?

And now to examine that steel dart which Mr. Hanbury shot from Banbury, where for a steel enthusiast his house is somewhat inappropriately called "Thickthorn." Let me quote from his letter:

"It has always been my opinion that the testing of records should be done with a steel needle. Really first-rate recordings, viz. *William Tell*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Symphony in E flat* (Mozart), etc., are splendid with steel, on a suitable machine. A fibre is what we might describe as being kind to the recording and does not show up the faults. That record *Una voce poco fa*, Miliza Korjus (H.M.V. C2688), you certainly can hear

the interference in three or four places with a fibre, although many people have not done so. Try it through with steel and there is no doubt of it. One expert told me it was the echo of her own voice. I believe it is caused through another singer a little way off in another studio."

This steel dart reached me just after I had changed from fibre to steel in order to play through the H.M.V. plum-label disc of the Coldstream Guards Band playing a most welcome selection from *The Arcadians*, and thereby effecting an unmistakable improvement in the reproduction. It may be argued that brass instruments will naturally respond better to a metal needle, but I do not feel perfectly satisfied that this is a sound deduction. When I look back to the time I finally, as I thought, renounced metal needles in favour of fibre or non-metallic composition needles, I recall that it was when electrical recording was at its harshest. Now once a gramophile has definitely given up metallic needles it is extremely difficult to persuade him to return to them on account of their undoubtedly harder wear on records. Nevertheless, I am beginning to waver again. I played through the H.M.V. album of *Orchestral Excerpts from Götterdämmerung* played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, and had to admit the superiority of the result obtained with steel over that attained with fibre. Then having been a little doubtful about the success of the recording of the second disc of Ravel's *Rapsodie Espagnole* played by the same orchestra under Stokowski and issued last month from H.M.V., I tried it again with steel, and found the clarity unmistakably improved. Yes, I have been shaken, but I shall still hold fast to fibre for chamber music. These Ravel discs display all the prodigality of the composer's orchestration and all the parsimony of his thematic material. Ravel might retort that this composition was not intended to do more than make the most of one or two simple dance rhythms with voluptuous glissandos on the harp and a subtle use of percussion. One has to be in the right mood for musical impressionism of this kind, but in the right mood it can give extreme pleasure.

Piano Quartets of Brahms

For a long time now I have been intending to write every month a few words about some of the records that have given me an enduring and ever-increasing delight, before I am lost in the latest recordings. This month I shall choose the two H.M.V. albums of Brahms' Piano Quartet in G Minor played by Arthur Rubinstein and members of the Pro Arte Quartet, and the Piano Quartet in A Major played by Rudolf Serkin with members of the Busch String Quartet. These albums were issued with one of the supplements of the *Connoisseur Catalogue* in 1933. When they first appeared I failed to appreciate them fully either as music or as recording, and now when I listen to lovely

theme after lovely theme, to the unbroken flow of exquisite melody, and to the perfection of balance between the instruments, I ask myself how I could ever have thought that they were on the whole rather dull. Incidentally, I may say that this is the kind of music and recording which is *marvellously* shown off by the Mark Xb. I have just been hearing them played through while lying in bed in some pain, and it is remarkable how superior is the tranquillising effect of music with form like this compared with the loose impressionistic music of more recent years.

The first of these quartets, the one in G minor, offers a pretty problem. When Brahms sent it for criticism to his friend Joachim, the great violinist gave high praise to all of it except the first movement, which he did not care for. It is not known whether Brahms rewrote this movement or not. As it stands, Sir Donald Tovey wrote of it in Cobbett's *Survey* that it was "one of the most impressive and tragic compositions since the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony."

I should not venture to disagree with a musician of such eminence on any technical point, but by using the word "tragic" Sir Donald broadens the subject sufficiently to allow room for an impressionistic critic like myself to intrude, and I shall disagree boldly by asserting that on me neither the first movement of this quartet nor the first movement of the Ninth Symphony even hints at tragedy. I find the first movement of this quartet as lyrical as some ode of Catullus, with not even so much of sorrow in it as the poet's last farewell to his brother, but reminiscent rather of the song to his beloved peninsula of Sirmio. This impression may be due to my having listened to it frequently while I was writing my last novel, "The Darkening Green," which was an attempt to express a nostalgia for places beloved in the past. The second movement suggests to me a lyric of young love, of young love perplexed by the worldly problems that crowd upon young lovers. It has a sort of fluttering beauty, which presumably made Niemann compare it to the "incessant beating of an agonized heart." I should prefer to compare it to the song of a goldfinch in dipping flight from head to head of thistle-down and singing as he goes that half pensive, half eager tune of the wasteland. The third movement, *andante con moto*, is a glorious melody, tranquil as a broad-bosomed stream flowing majestically through hay-fields in the June sunlight. The way this movement seems to have been evolved from the mood of the two preceding movements is a revelation of supreme musical genius. It has the quality of some great passage in Virgil. The last movement is a *rondo alla zingarese*, and we know what Brahms could do when he was feeling Hungarian. This great quartet was first performed in Hamburg in 1861 by Clara Schumann and three members of the local orchestra.

The second Quartet in A major offers but one puzzle to the listener who has heard it many times, and

that is whether he does not love it even better than the one in G minor. For my part I find it impossible to make up my mind. The A major is a more robust work. The first movement is almost defiant, and, though of course not in the least Mozartian, it has the same kind of effect on the listener as Mozart when he is in one of his defiant moods. The second movement is fantastically beautiful in an elegiac mood, and those who are interested in piano-recording will be ravished by the arpeggio passages. I hope I have said enough to suggest to readers who have not yet considered investing in these albums that the proposition is a tempting one. If it is to be a question of one or the other, I shall advise buying the G minor first. Those who like myself are still learners must not expect to be able to hum through these quartets after a first hearing, but I will guarantee that anybody with the smallest pretensions to appreciate music will echo my enthusiasm after three or four playings.

More Buried Treasure

On going through some vocal records the other day I discovered two of exceptional merit which I have not yet mentioned. The first is a red ten-inch H.M.V. (DA4402) of Maria Ivoguen singing five enchanting little folksongs in German. Some will remember the beauty of her voice on gold-label Brunswick records; or was it on those hill-and-dale Edison records of some years ago? Her voice reminds me of Frieda Hempel's. I want to urge this record because I know that everybody who obtains it will be grateful to me for bringing it to his attention. Note that it is in the Connoisseur's Catalogue.

Another exceptionally attractive vocal disc from that catalogue is a red twelve-inch (DB1932), on one side of which Pia Tassinari sings the Aria from Boito's *Mefistofele*, "L'Altra notte in fondo al mare," as well as Alda sang it on a memorable H.M.V. disc of years ago. And on the other side this accomplished soprano sings with a most sympathetic tenor, Piero Pauli, "O soave fanciulla," a performance which recalls some of the classic discs of the great duet from *Bohème*.

Speech Training Records

Before I say anything about the four Speech Training records issued by H.M.V. on ten-inch plum-label discs I ought solemnly to declare in print that my prejudice against professional elocution is so acute and so profound that it is impossible for me to be fair to any professional elocutionist. Miss Marjorie Gullan, the Principal of the Polytechnic School of Speech Training, must acquit me of any personal discourtesy and accept my remarks as applicable to every professional elocutionist when I say that the sound of her voice on these records fills me with a passionate desire to raise a Tower of Babel infinitely larger than the original

Tower of Babel and turn it into a pleasure-dome where children of every age, sex and nationality may talk as they like. What I find depressing is the progressive deterioration in the quality of the performances on these records. The Infants are enchanting, and when we hear the contrast between their delicious voices and that of their instructress it is sad to contemplate their gradual progress in affectation to fit them for the ranks of the London Verse-Speaking Choir. The first side of the first record shows the Infants able to pronounce clearly "Oo" and "Ow." For this they presumably owe thanks to their instructress. Yet at the end of this side Miss Gullan recites a jingle in a manner which if copied by the Infants would undo all her own work. Far better let them utter a clear cockney "crown" than stifle the "ow" in the throat with excessive gentility. Gentility is the bane of these records. Apparently it is more genteel to say "daw" instead of "door." Of what use then to give them that well-rolled "r" in front of "ringing"? By the time we reach the second side of the Juniors gentility is rampant, and in addition to "daw" for "door" we get "faw" for "four." Hope revives with "The North Wind," which is charmingly given by the Juniors further along the same side, only to be dashed by the devastating gentility of the Seniors in Kingsley's "The Sands o' Dee." The Infants pronounced "nose" perfectly, but the Seniors pronounce "home" and "foam" with an execrable duplicate vowel sound. Genteel Cockney at its very worst! Kelvinside and Murrayfield at their very worst! And what happens to "never" and "hair" can be imagined. The recitation of the old madrigal "Sister Awake" is to be censured less for faults of pronunciation than for faults of intonation and accentuation. To quote from the leaflet, "the work of these seniors shows the standard of speech and tone which can be reached by children of the very poorest districts whose surroundings and general background offer no cultural help to them." Yet the Infants on record 1 and the Juniors on record 2 are much better speakers than the Seniors on record 3. For this we must blame elocution carried beyond common sense into genteel affectation. On the fourth record the London Verse-Speaking Choir, the grown-up representatives of this elocutionary system, open well with "Spin, Lassie, Spin." But "Leezie Lindsay"! Apart from the ridiculous effect of mincing out this old Scots ballad in voices that match the polite little finger held daintily away from a cup of tea there is a bad howler in one of the words. Lord Ranald Macdonald was "a chieftain of high degree," not highest! Arthur O'Shaughnessy's poem "The Music Makers" has always had a moving rhetorical effect on adolescence, and I take no exception to the way it is droned forth here. Still, it is cheap stuff, and some rhetoric from Byron like "Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll" would have tested the choristers more usefully. The biblical passages on the second side of the last record are given

tolerably well in that conventional style of elocution which has driven the poetic drama from the British stage. I have heard and seen in my time four superlatively great actresses and three superlatively great actors—Duse, Réjane, Bernhardt, and Mrs. Fiske, Coquelin, Guitry, and Irving. None of them spoke a word that sounded in the least like a professional elocutionist. I have heard many of the greatest preachers of our time. None of them spoke a word like a professional elocutionist. I have heard many of the greatest poets of our time read their own works, and although the great majority read them abominably, at least they did not read them like professional elocutionists.

What I have written above is to be read, I must repeat, as the expression of an individual's point of view. I realise perfectly that the fashion of the time demands this kind of teaching for children, and therefore these records issued by H.M.V. will undoubtedly be warmly welcomed. Moreover, a recording company can hardly be expected to produce speech records that follow a method out of touch with the prevailing system, however deplorable people like myself may consider such a system. We shall be glad to offer space in our columns for a defence of what I consider synthetic gentility and what others consider carefully applied culture. I reserve my counter-attack.

Some Recent Records

Vincent D'Indy's *Symphony on a Mountain Song* played by Marguerite Long and the Colonne Orchestra under Paul Paray and published by Columbia on three twelve-inch light-blue discs is a fascinating work which I commend without qualification. The more works for piano and orchestra recorded, the better for the popularity of the gramophone. It always amuses me to see the way in which those who are most obstinately suspicious of "Ops" will relax their frowns when the piano appears, which goes to prove that the British public does not dislike good music for its lack of easily discoverable melodiousness, but on account of the unfamiliarity of the actual noise made by the orchestra or the string quartet. The moment they hear a piano they feel at home. Another brilliant recording by Columbia is a dark-blue twelve-inch disc of Sir Hamilton Harty and the London Philharmonic Orchestra playing *The Corsair Overture* of Berlioz. The performance and recording of the *Fifth Brandenburg Concerto* played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Melichar on four Decca-Polydor discs is a joy, and the playing of the harpsichord soloist is outstanding. I have no hesitation in naming these four Decca-Polydor discs as my favourites among all the Brandenburg Concerto recordings.

Parlophone sent out a wonderful trio of vocal records last month. Conchita Supervia is in magnificent form on a twelve-inch Odeon, singing what is called

"Air de Rosine et duo" from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. I sympathise with our reviewer's antiquarian perplexity. Every time I hear a record of this great singer I wish for an operatic album in which she is the star. The next record is a twelve-inch Parlophone of Vladimir Rosing and Olga Alexeeva singing four of the most melodious Russian Gypsy songs. I consider this one of the best vocal records Parlophone has ever published, and when one looks back on the outstanding vocal records of Parlophone in the last twelve years that is praise indeed. I hope that the response will be sufficiently encouraging for a series of Gypsy song records from these two artists. The third of this fine trio of vocal records is a ten-inch Parlophone of John Hendrik singing "The Merry Widow Waltz" and "Vilia" in a style that is entirely his own, and a very delightful style at that. It reflects somewhat on the speech training of our English singers that until I heard Mr. Hendrik sing "Vilia" I had always supposed that Vilia was William. On a twelve-inch red H.M.V. Elisabeth Schumann sings Schubert's "Ave Maria" with full emotional orchestral effects, and on the other side Bach's lovely "Bist du bei mir." This disc should be a best seller, and moreover deserves to be. I was interested to note the return of Mr. William Primrose to the gramophone as a viola player. He did some beautiful violin records some years ago, including Vaughan Williams' "Lark Ascending." I am afraid I have to call the viola record a dull one musically, but I hope that he has more interesting records in store, for he is really a first-class player.

Among the light records of last month do not miss the delicious twelve-inch Columbia of a Walt Disney Selection by the Silly Symphonic Orchestra. It is the very perfection of recording and should be a joy to old and young alike. The long list of good comic records from Columbia gets a notable addition with John Tilley's performance of "A Scoutmaster" in monologue on one side of a twelve-inch dark-blue disc, and on the other of "A Mayor" with adenoids. The first album of the Delius Society, a triumph of Sir Thomas Beecham's Columbia recording, did not reach me in time to justify my discussing it at length this month, and I have to make the same excuse for saying nothing yet about the fourth Hugo Wolf album.

We must all have been much heartened last month by Mrs. Imhof's announcement that her House had completed the most successful year's trading since it was founded in 1845, for we have all been worried about the future of the gramophone since the crisis. And this confirmation of my own optimism, which has been growing steadily during the last six months, is the best of good news. The recording companies are putting out magnificent stuff, and I plead with all my heart for a little extravagance in the way of record-buying. It would help me a great deal if I could hear that my recommendations in this month's editorial had borne practical fruit in the way of sales.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

ENRICO CARUSO

FIFTEEN LITTLE-KNOWN RECORDS

by THE REV. H. J. DRUMMOND

THE subject of this article is fifteen records made by Caruso for the Victor Company, which were not reviewed by Mr. Potter in his Caruso articles written for THE GRAMOPHONE four years ago because they had never been issued in England or had been withdrawn long before he wrote that invaluable series. In addition to these Victor records, eight of the twenty-two records which Caruso made in Milan have also now been withdrawn, but I shall not attempt to say anything about these, to collectors the most interesting of all Caruso's records, as all that is necessary has already been said about most of them in "Collectors' Corner" and no doubt the rest will have their turn in course of time.

I hope that this review of these fifteen Victor records will not be altogether without a practical value, as none of them is in the strict sense of the word unobtainable, though they can no longer be obtained in the ordinary way. The shells of all of them are still in existence and they may be obtained as special pressings, though two guineas is a prohibitive price for most people. There must also be a number of these records hidden away in old iron and secondhand furniture shops, and these when they can be found have an appeal that can never belong to a special pressing.

It must always be a matter for regret that while the majority of Caruso's Milan records still remain on the Gramophone Company's No. 2 List, not one of his first Victor records has survived. Of the ten titles made in 1904, four have never been issued here and the other six have long since been withdrawn. This is no doubt partly accounted for by the fact that all these titles except two (*La donna è mobile* and *Recondita armonia*) had already been made by Caruso in Milan, and that nine out of the ten were subsequently remade by him with orchestral accompaniments. But this does little to lessen our regret, for these 1904 records have a character of their own and when properly reproduced are most valuable mementos of Caruso's singing at this stage of his career. They are very free from extraneous noises and are actually more forward in tone than those made in 1905, though not perhaps preserving quite so much of the quality of Caruso's voice. An interesting feature of these records is in the tempo of the music, which is in most cases taken more slowly than in earlier or later recordings of the same titles. One gets the impression that there was a determination that at all costs Caruso should not be hurried. Just one word about the speed at which these records reproduce best. Unlike so many of Caruso's records made between 1902 and 1907, in which the voice sounds constricted and unnaturally high if played too fast, records of this 1904 group will be found, I think, to give the best results when played at the speed of 80.

The 1904 *Questa o quella* (2-52480), which has never been issued in England, is a better record of Caruso's voice than the 1902 one, though as a rendering I prefer the earlier one. Neither of them, however, can compare with the final recording made in 1908, which deserves all the praise Mr. Potter has bestowed on it. The reproduction of Caruso's voice is here superb, while its vivid portrayal of the cynical heartlessness

of the Duke's character makes the 1904 version sound tame by comparison.

Caruso's 1904 *La donna è mobile* (52062) is interesting as being his first recording of this famous aria. At the beginning the voice sounds rather dark and heavy, but the tone brightens as it goes on, though all through the singer's upper register seems to record better than his lower, the high notes being sung without any trace of the forcing of the voice which Mr. Potter notices in the 1908 record. As an interpretation, however, it seems to me, like the *Questa o quella*, rather lifeless.

The chief interest of the two discs (52065 and 052073) which were devoted in 1904 to the recording of *Una furtiva lagrima* lies in the time Caruso has at his disposal for the singing of the aria. In the 10-inch Milan record he has roughly three minutes, in 1911 he has just under four, in 1904 he has over five. The recording of 1904 is, of course, not quite that of 1911, and I daresay this would make the final version the popular choice. But in spite of good points, I have always thought it a disappointing record. So much time is taken up by the orchestral introduction that the whole performance seems hurried, giving Caruso no time for the long-drawn-out notes that make the 1904 singing such a delight to listen to, especially in the final verse. There are places too in the 1911 record where Caruso's voice is not free from roughness, which is never the case with the earlier record.



Enrico Caruso

Celeste Aida (052074) is, I believe, the only record of this group which has been the subject of critical comment in "Collectors' Corner," where Mr. Hurst has called attention to it as affording us one of the best examples of Caruso's breath-control in his earlier days. This is one of the record's chief claims to praise, but not the only one, for it is sung with ardour and is a fine rendering, the portamentos being beautiful. It is in keeping with the general tempo of the 1904 records that Caruso allows himself here more time for singing this aria than in any of the five records of it which he made. All these, except the 1903 one, have points of interest, but on the whole I prefer the final version, made with the recitative in 1911, to the one made in 1908. It has, I think, more atmosphere about it, even if the voice is less attractive than on the earlier record.

Coming to the "Tosca" excerpts, one recalls the bitter disappointment of Caruso when in the autumn of 1899 Puccini took from him the opportunity of creating the rôle of Cavaradossi on the occasion of the opera's world première (January 1900) and gave it to Emilio de Marchi. At the time this seemed to Caruso to be a serious setback. How small a matter it was to appear within a few months! *E lucevan le stelle* (52063), which has never been issued here, is well recorded, but I prefer the phrasing in both the earlier and later versions. In the 1904 one Caruso's interpretation sometimes has the effect of drawing attention from the music to himself. An example of this occurs in his singing of the passage *Le belle forme disciogliea dai veli*, where the long-held notes seem to lessen the pathos of the aria.

Caruso's first *Recondita armonia* (52191) is taken at a slower tempo than in 1909. Owing no doubt to the recording, the voice sounds darker and heavier than in the final version, but its warmth and richness are enchanting to the ear. The closing passages especially are wonderfully sung with a full-throated ease which I think even surpasses its successor.

The "Cavalleria Rusticana" piece *O Lola, ch'ai di latti la cammisa* (52064), another of this series never issued in this country, is, I am afraid, a disappointing record. Unlike most of these 1904 records, it seems hurriedly sung. Listening to it and to the one made in Milan four months previously, one is conscious of an immaturity in the singer's art. Fortunately, it was to be a case of the third time paying for all. The 1911 *Siciliana*, so greatly admired by the late Herman Klein, is one of Caruso's great records. It is not merely a better record of his voice than either of the early recordings, but in phrasing, balance and artistic restraint is on an altogether higher level.

Chiudo gli occhi (2-52479) is the only title of this series which Caruso never subsequently remade. It is also, I think, the best of his 1904 Victors. As a rendering it is very similar to the 1902 one, the tempo being exactly the same, but it far exceeds it as a presentation of the singer's voice, uniting to the richness of the *Recondita armonia* a clarity and sweetness not quite equalled by any of the others. Caruso continued to sing in "Manon" till late in 1917 and made two other records from the opera, one being a duet with Geraldine Farrar, but the fact that we have no Caruso *Il Sogno* with orchestral accompaniment increases our regret that this beautiful 1904 record has never been issued in England.

Vesti la giubba (52066), which if he were living to-day would, I suppose, be called Caruso's "signature tune," is the last of our 1904 records and is with the "Cavalleria Rusticana" record one of the two which can fairly be called disappointing. The 1903 and 1907 versions, while strikingly different from one another, are both notable renderings in which the listener really does feel the pathos of Canio's lament. But somehow the 1904 *Vesti la giubba*, though not badly recorded, seems to miss fire, and is perhaps chiefly interesting as evidence that there were days when Caruso did not sing even his favourite aria *con amore*.

We come now to the two records which out of the five made by Caruso in 1905 have not survived—*The Flower Song* ("Carmen") (052087) and *The Romance* ("Les Huguenots") (052088). This 1905 group marks for Caruso the end of an epoch. It is generally agreed that it was not until the end of 1906, when he sang *O Paradiso, Ideale and Triste Ritorno*, that the recording did his voice full justice. Nevertheless, in these 1905 records, in spite of a certain backwardness of tone, the real voice of Caruso is unmistakably heard. That voice was now at the height of its lyrical beauty, unmarred as yet by the falling across it of even the first of the many shadows which were to darken it in after days. This is true of the two records of which we are about to write no less than of the three which fortunately still survive. Among all the withdrawn Caruso records there are none whose disappearance we regret so much.

Il fior che avevi a me tu dato has already been the subject of much praise and it is indeed a lovely record. How easy Caruso seems. How well within himself. The high notes come with unforced sweetness and his singing of the words "M' inebriai del caro odor" gives the listener a moment of sheer delight. Queen Victoria is said to have once told someone that Mr. Gladstone usually addressed her as if she was a public meeting, and many tenors have sung the Flower Song like that. But Caruso did not in 1905. Less than five years later he again twice recorded this aria, but the difference in his singing of it then is remarkable.

Not less beautiful is *Bianca al par di neve alpina*. A comparison of this with the later recording of this aria is extremely interesting. The 1909 record is a magnificent piece of singing.

The voice is as mellow as in the earlier record and would probably have made a greater effect in a large building like the Albert Hall. Yet, for all its beauty, it does not seem to soar quite as it did in 1905. Then it rises again and again into the heights of the upper register in effortless flight, making us understand what the late Henry McK. Rothermel meant when he wrote "Never again shall you hear the soaring rapture of Caruso."

We have to pass over a gulf of seven years before we again come to a Caruso record which has been withdrawn. Indeed, as far as England and the United States are concerned, the 1912 *Quartette from "Rigoletto"* (2-054038), in which Caruso is associated with Tetrizzini, Amato and Jacoby, has never been issued, but it appears to have been obtainable in France for a time. A first hearing is sufficient to tell us why this record is not now on the Gramophone Company's list. The concerted singing—or the recording of it—is, I think, inferior to that heard in any of the three versions still extant. The introductory solo, however, is splendidly sung by Caruso, and in this one respect I prefer it to the 1917 record, though not to the two earlier ones in spite of their rather muddy recording.

In April 1917 Caruso made a second and final record of the Romance from "Marta" (6002-A), which has never been issued in England. The recording of this second *M'appari* certainly marks an advance upon that of the earlier one, but I do not think it compares favourably with it in any other respect. Caruso sings the aria more dramatically than he did in 1906, but the more frequent breathing gives a sort of staccato effect to this rendering and robs it of the smooth flowing legato of the earlier one. It is only fair to say, though, that Caruso in 1917 still retained to a surprising extent the power to sing this purely lyrical music, and also that the record is a much more natural representation of his voice than the electrically rejuvenated disc derived from it which was issued about two years ago.

In July 1918 Caruso made with orchestral accompaniment a second record of the well-known song by Alvarez, *La Partida* (6458-A), which he had previously sung in 1914 with piano accompaniment. This record has never been issued here. The orchestra and castanets make a more suitable setting for this Spanish song than the piano accompaniment does, but the voice sounds less pleasing than on the earlier record. Indeed, by this time the great tenor's voice was no longer what it had been.

Mr. Potter has said that the word "Ichabod" was never written for Caruso, as it has been for so many of the great singers of the past. This is true in the sense that the public eagerness to hear him was apparently greater in 1920 than ever before, for it was in that year that he was paid £2,000 a night in Havana, the highest fee he ever received. But, judging not only from his records but from general report, his voice had by then lost much of its original beauty, and indeed his state of health was such that it could hardly have been otherwise. I notice a considerable change in Caruso's voice after 1917. For about ten years before that date it had been gradually darkening and becoming more voluminous, but from the evidence of the records one would say that there was nothing seriously wrong with it as late as 1917, when it still sounds very much as when I last heard it in the spring of 1914, though probably the music in which it could be heard at its best had become more limited. But with the exception of the duet with Gogorza, which was made earlier in the year than any of the others, the records which Caruso made in 1918 seem to me to show a marked deterioration in his voice, not even excepting the beautifully sung *Campane a sera*. Subsequently there was no recovery, though of course some records were better than others, but to the very end, where the music was slow enough to allow him plenty of time, Caruso's voice still retained much of that peculiar beauty which makes it so unlike all other tenor voices.



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RACHMANINOFF

by NICHOLAS NADEJINE

HAD not Captain Basil Rachmaninoff, late of the Imperial Cavalry Guards, brought himself to complete ruin by his unlucky speculations and gambling, the world might never have heard of Sergei Rachmaninoff, the great composer and one of the most brilliant pianists of our time.

Fate was against young Sergei's stepping into the military boots of his fathers, the Imperial Guards had to do without his services, and the world had to wait only a few years to discover a new star of the first magnitude.

Probably no better Boswell than Oscar von Rieseemann ("Rachmaninoff's recollections told to O. von Rieseemann." G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., price 10s. 6d.) could have been entrusted with the fascinating task of writing the life of Rachmaninoff.

Von Rieseemann is an ideal biographer, for being absolutely impersonal, he with a touching modesty keeps himself out of the picture and in his narrative succeeds in giving us a most thorough story of Rachmaninoff's life, and incidentally reconstructs a vivid panorama of musical and social life in Russia before the Revolution.

For life was fascinating then in the days of now so much maligned Czarism, and strange as it may seem, Russia then was probably the freest country on the earth and certainly the most musical one.

Like Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Borodin, Moussorgsky, Balakireff, Cui and Scriabin, Rachmaninoff was born (in 1873) into a family of the provincial landowners and soldiers. Like them, he spent a happy childhood in a beautiful country house, where his family lived the life of proverbial Russian lavishness. In 1882, their last estate having been sold by auction, Sergei's parents separated, never to be reconciled.

Mrs. Rachmaninoff and her children settled down in St. Petersburg and nine-years-old Sergei, now a pupil in the College of Music, became and remained always the only man in the family, taking in his young but already so firm hands the destinies of his folk. He became a musician when four years old, he took his first piano lessons from his mother, he was still under five when he played his first tunes for his grandfather, who amongst other things was a very accomplished pianist. For four years he was taught by a Miss Ornazka, herself a pupil of Anton Rubinstein.

Thus he had a very solid foundation for his future career as a pianist.

He was eleven when he first appeared at a public concert given by the pupils of St. Petersburg Conservatoire, which was attended by the President of the Imperial Musical Society, Grand Duke Konstantin.

Three powerful influences could be traced in the formation of the musical character of Rachmaninoff: the beautiful singing of his sister Helena, who was blessed with a glorious contralto voice and was first to introduce him to the music of Tchaikovsky, the glorious choir singing in the famous churches of St. Petersburg, and the wonderful personality of

his cousin A. Siloti, the favourite pupil of A. Rubinstein and Liszt.

So the star of a new genius was finding its orbit in the musical firmament.

After having studied for two years in St. Petersburg Conservatoire, he, following the advice of Siloti, was transferred to the Moscow Conservatoire, his teachers there being Zvereff for the piano, Arensky for theory, and Taneeff for harmony. Thus we see him coming under the overwhelming influence of the Westerns of Russian music.

Tchaikovsky, Arensky and Taneeff had no time for the national revival. Just as they could not hear anything worth hearing in Brahms and Wagner, they could not hear in the titanic efforts of the leaders of the Neo-Russian school, Moussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakoff, anything but a shapeless conglomeration of incongruous sounds. So in this atmosphere of defiance of truly Russian influences grew young Sergei Rachmaninoff.

But his "Westerns" he studied thoroughly, he knew his Josquin, his Lassus and his Bach.

We see young Rachmaninoff playing in the famous music-rooms of great merchant princes of Moscow and raising the enthusiasm of his brilliant audiences, just as a hundred years before him Beethoven or Mozart were delighting the audiences in the palaces of Princess Lobkowitz or Prince Esterhazy.

We see eighteen-years-old Rachmaninoff finishing his opera *Aleco* in the complete orchestral score in fifteen days, thus passing brilliantly his final examinations. We see him as the conductor of Mamontoff Opera House, as the conductor of Imperial Opera House (1904-1906), see him living in Dresden in retirement with touring intervals.

We see him coming into contact with the publishing firm Gutheil in Moscow and selling his first songs for £25 apiece, while Gretchaninoff had to be satisfied with a fee of fifty shillings for his *Lullaby*.

We catch glimpses of Tchaikovsky, Arensky, Taneeff and Rimsky-Korsakoff, we see young Diaghileff, this mightiest of all Barnums.

Then in November 1917, a few weeks after Lenin and his disciples successfully conquered the ruins of the Russian Empire, Rachmaninoff crossed his Rubicon.

With a permit from the new rulers of Russia he went for a concert tour to Sweden, where much to his own astonishment he found himself known principally as the composer of the *Prelude in C sharp minor*.

Then, after having twice declined the offer of conductorship to the Boston Orchestra, he went to America on his first tour. Since then his way to Parnassus was easy enough and his life and his triumphs are known to everyone.

Von Rieseemann is, of course, not a Strachey or an André Maurois, but his life of one of the great romantics of the world of music is quite an achievement.



Sergei Rachmaninoff

MIHALOVICI'S SONATINA FOR OBOE AND PIANOFORTE (1924)

by TERPANDER

LITTLE is known in England about Marcel Mihalovici, except that he is in the early thirties.

This Sonatina is *not* a masterpiece, nor do I claim to have discovered a genius—but the composer has a pleasant talent, and the discovery of such a talent has a charm all its own, an unruffled charm, not to be compared with the intense spiritual excitement which only the revelation of greatness can bring. The music demonstrates a faculty for adroit workmanship—Mihalovici certainly knows the ropes. It is, shall we say, well turned-out without being dandified (it takes a Poulenc to play the dandy successfully), and contrives to imitate the real thing without becoming offensively second-rate.

The Sonatina is remarkable for its combination of a number of neo-classical devices with a species of musical impressionism tending quite frankly in the direction of the romantic. This latter conclusion is borne out by the fact that the melodic curve hints frequently at the atonal, while the neo-classical devices remain conspicuously devices, lacking the conviction and vitality which only a firm belief in the virtues of classicism and baroque could give to them. The composer is not satisfied with the conventional Italian labels in their unadorned state, and sub-titles his movements—with equal conventionality, for that matter. *Lento* (Nocturne) surely presupposes some ulterior motive gnawing at the root of the music! Add to which the juicily dissonant writing for pianoforte, and the rather forced use of polyrhythmic devices (again “devices”), and you will surely come to the conclusion, as I have, that we have before us a work of a slightly inhibited romantic character.

1. *Moderato (Pastorale)*. This is a true first movement, inspiring both interest and respect, so that although one may not grasp it perfectly at the outset one returns again and again to it. Of predominating importance is the opening pianoforte phrase. Repeated continually at different intervals, often in diminution, its especial function seems to be to cement together the long, sweeping oboe phrases. Accompanimental figures bud easily and naturally from it, and no praise can be too high for the resource displayed by the composer in handling this very fluid “generating” theme. The harmony of this movement (indeed, of the whole Sonatina) is very capricious, and specific keys are not easy to locate. Nevertheless the oboe provides an exception to this rule by opening with an acidulated melody, which gravitates ostensibly round the tonic of B major. This melody breeds a number of variants of itself, but is always quite recognisable, chiefly by reason of a characteristic little triplet figure (3 in the time of 2) which is never discarded. The pianoforte part is highly decorative, the effect and treatment of its arpeggii being at times reminiscent of Debussy (see (5), bar 4). Oboe and pianoforte are rhythmically combined in an ingenious manner, the most telling example of this being perhaps the *animando* section at (3), which is both syncopated and delightfully fluid. An interesting rhythmic figure at (1) is worthy of note. Being extremely dissonant it achieves a quarter-tonal, off-the-note effect which, in the case of one listener, brought instantly to mind the music of the island of Bali, with its strange din produced by combinations of outlandish percussion instruments. The figure is repeated three bars before (5), and also

at (9), where, coming after an unaccompanied oboe section, it forms part of the *Coda*.

2. *Vivo (Scherzo)*. The most delightful feature about this movement is the perverse but extremely engaging oboe tune (alternate bars of 3/4 and 2/4) with which it commences. Note also supporting rhythmical accompaniment of pianoforte; the reiterated oboe notes against fiercely percussive chords at (14) and (15), followed by a syncopated running figure: oboe and L.H. pianoforte; the hesitating oboe chromatics at (17); the rather inane musical thinking at (18); the return of the tune at (20) and the complementary rhythmic section (built out of the pianoforte accompaniment to the tune) which follows it for the first time (21); and the prolonged trill (*accelerando*) which announces the conclusion of the movement. Edwin Evans once wrote (of polytonality) that “it produces, in my opinion, something that is rare in music, namely, phonetic comedy, humour that is perceptible in the sounds without the aid of related ideas.” I feel that much the same could be said of this exhilarating *Scherzo*.

3. *Lento (Notturmo)*. Slow movements, in my opinion, depend, more than any other type of movement, on what, in my article on Satie*, I called “the apt spacing of musical ideas.” The musical ideas in this instance are a long and languorous oboe melody, repeated twice, at (0) and (24), and each time loaded with the most exquisite embellishments; a supporting pianoforte counterpoint of an incredible textural richness; an interlude of pianoforte chords, almost dripping with luscious harmony, a bar after (23); and a final episode at (26), where the oboe gives forth a melody as simple as the preceding one is adorned, beneath which the pianoforte, with a new four-quaver accompaniment, mounts slowly upwards (*diminuendo*) to complete etiolation.

4. *Vivo e giocoso (Rondo)*. The two main ideas of the *Rondo* are to be found at (0), where the oboe gives out an impudent tune, perky with grace notes, and at (29), where the piano has a rather rhapsodical, very “pianistic” passage (using the term in its Chopinesque sense) while the oboe is resting. The second solo appearance of this passage, at (44), shows it transformed, left hand and right hand having apparently agreed to usurp each other's functions. At (30) some not very distinguished new material makes an appearance, and an *allargando* leads to the second rondo repetition of the tune (33), which at (36), (37) and (38) is considerably developed. At (40) a clever rhythmic variant of the tune is introduced, while the piano is reduced to banging out repeated chords. Henceforth the tune endeavours to be itself again, but fails dismally, especially in the *Coda*, where it falls to pieces altogether, and the work ends *precipitando*, with the pianoforte exulting discordantly. Why will composers write Rondos as final movements? These invariably give an impression of superficiality after all that has gone before—the form is terribly hidebound—and they very rarely come off. Mihalovici gets five out of ten marks for his.

The Sonatina is excellently played and recorded on two dark blue French Columbias (12-inch), and the score is published by *La Sirène Musicale*. I consider the score, in this case, an indispensable adjunct.

* THE GRAMOPHONE, January 1935.

TUNE-A-MINUTE

PEGGY COCHRANE

by W. S. MEADMORE

AT a musical party one night, Peggy Cochrane was turning the rhythm of a Chopin nocturne into syncopation when a quiet and somewhat modest-looking stranger walked across the room and asked her to "jazz" Ravel's "Bolero." The stranger chuckled with delight at the result of his suggestion, and Peggy Cochrane, seeing that her joke was going down so well, went from one exaggeration to another. But, later in the evening, she was greatly embarrassed and horrified when the stranger was pointed out to her as being Maurice Ravel himself! But the composer of the "Sonatina" and of "The Tomb of Couperin" has always admired jazz; now whenever he and Miss Cochrane meet, he invariably asks to hear more of her audacious "jazzing" of serious music.

This streak of syncopation has always run through Peggy Cochrane's musical life. At the age of twelve she was awarded a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music; in the intervals of her serious study, she would steal away to some secluded classroom and play jazz music in sheer reaction against the formalism of the classical composers. Nor did she ever lack an audience!

Yet, on her sixteenth birthday, at her first important public appearance—this was at the Aquarium at Brighton—she played the solo part in the rarely heard Rimsky-Korsakov piano concerto with Lyell-Taylor's orchestra.

On the shelves of Peggy Cochrane's gramophone records, Elgar's symphonies and Wagner's operas jostle with Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" and other jazz classics. She says that her taste in music is catholic; that she adores Elgar and loves Russian music and Wagner. She thinks of music as colour; to her every key has an individual tint.

Peggy Cochrane's father was a Scot who came South to live at Streatham. He had always wanted to express himself in music, and, self-taught, was a fine amateur violinist. As a youth he had tried to persuade his father to let him take up music as a career, but his parents would not listen to him, considering the profession of music to be neither respectable nor remunerative. His thwarted ambition centred itself on his daughter; he had had no chance, she should have every; his efforts in music had been negligible, she should become world-famous! So, Peggy Cochrane told me, "I was put to it when I was five," "it" being the piano. A year later she was also learning the violin. And now peeps out for the first time that quality of perverseness which later was to lead her to run away from the endless repetition of a Beethoven sonata in one classroom to indulge in an orgy of jazz in another.

She did not share her father's vision of her future, she wanted to be an actress. To act or to dance seemed far more desirable to her than to hold a vast audience at the Albert Hall entranced

with a concerto. She induced her mother to let her attend classes in ballet and stage dancing.

When she was eight, Peggy Cochrane played to Leopold Auer while he was on a visit to London. The Hungarian violinist was so impressed with her possibilities that he wanted to take her back to Russia to the Conservatoire at St. Petersburg, where he then taught. But she was too young to go alone and it was impossible for her parents to accompany her, so the project fell through. Eventually she studied with Spencer Dyke before going to the Academy.

She made her professional debut as a violinist at the Aeolian Hall at the age of seventeen. The Press notices were most eulogistic—I have seen and read them, and there is no doubt that Peggy Cochrane was regarded as a prodigy of the first water. But the notices produced no startling glut of engagements; in those days the powers of the London concert world moved slowly indeed. After a time, Peggy Cochrane suggested to her father that she was rather tired of waiting for contracts and she thought that it was high time she started to earn some money so that she could at least buy her own stockings.

Meanwhile, she had been making records for the old Vocalion Company. One of these was the slow movement of the Mendelssohn Concerto, recorded at the Central Hall, Westminster, with the organ taking the place of the orchestra. Other delightful records of this time were arrangements (by herself) of Negro spirituals.

Since those days Miss Cochrane has made considerably over one hundred records, has broadcast con-

tinuously for the past ten years, has been "starred" on the music-halls, and has played, sung, and crooned with jazz bands. She has also realised her girlish ambition to appear in a theatre.

Gwen Farrar and Norah Blaney had been rehearsing for "Wonder Bar." Two days before the show opened, Norah Blaney discovered that she had signed a contract to appear in pantomime at Manchester. Gwen Farrar was at her wits' ends to know what to do when she suddenly remembered a girl whom she had seen in a charity show in "That Certain Trio." The girl was Peggy Cochrane. Norah Blaney wired her. For two days Peggy Cochrane rehearsed day and night, but she was word and music perfect on the first night.

Since then she has not only appeared in several musical shows but has also written many numbers and incidental music for stage pieces. She takes her composing very seriously (and it deserves to be taken seriously); the biggest thrill she ever had was when she heard an errand boy whistling outside her house, and suddenly realised that the tune was a song she had written called "The Ache in My Heart"!



Miss Peggy Cochrane

MILIZA KORJUS

THE NEW COLORATURA

by CEDRIC WALLIS

It must be nearly eighteen years since the first Galli-Curci record burst upon an astonished gramophone world. I well remember the sensation made by the entrancing vocal quality and the dazzling technique of (I think) that now classic "Mad Scene" from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Since then, we have welcomed many another coloratura, Toti dal Monte and Lily Pons being amongst the most distinguished. But, in almost every case of note, since Galli-Curci, there has been a flourish of preliminary advertising trumpets, or an already large reputation in some other part of the world, that has necessarily raised expectations and correspondingly reduced the element of surprise that is an important factor in all first-class sensations.

Miliza Korjus, however, has been an event. She crept out almost surreptitiously, a few months ago, in all the humility of a Plum Label, but there is every indication that she has come to stay. Already there are two double-sided records in the English H.M.V. list, and a careful examination of the recent Continental supplements has revealed to me three more, which are presumably *en route* for this country. This article is based on a first-hand knowledge of a total of nine sides, comprising the following:

- Frühlingsstimmen (Strauss). Variationen (Proch).
- Die Nachtigall (Alabieff). Variationen (Mozart-Adam).
- Mazurka (Chopin). Aufforderung zum Tanz (Weber).
- Der Hölle Rache (Mozart). Martern aller Arten (Mozart).
- Una voce poco fa (Rossini).

These records are doubled in order, as set out, but in England the "Una voce poco fa" is backed by the Mozart-Adam variations, in the place of the song by Alabieff. There is at least one other double-sided record obtainable from the foreign lists, but I have not heard it, nor can I remember the titles, though I believe it is of two rather simple German songs, one of which may or may not be the well-known Mozart Cradle Song, "Schlafe, mein Prinzchen."

I went somewhat sceptically to hear my first Korjus record. New and unheralded coloraturas are apt, in my experience, to be disappointing, and I was frankly not expecting a great deal. It is therefore a tribute worth recording that, before the singer had come to the end of Proch's well-worn theme, I had placed two florins confidently upon the counter, a gesture I have not been able to accord to a new singer for a very long time. I have not regretted my precipitancy, if such it was.

The voice itself is a very individual one, and some may find it a taste to be acquired. Personally, I find its quality most appealing. The middle and lower range reminds one of Galli-Curci herself, in the glory of her too-short prime—the later pre-electrical period, when the voice of molten velvet was at its most voluptuous. Not that Korjus always shows this sensuous quality, but a comparison between the records which the two singers have made of dear old Proch's musical-box Variations will show this resemblance at its most marked. The upper notes of the Korjus voice, ranging to a ringing F in alt, are brilliant almost to hardness, but have never the steam-whistle shrillness of, for example, the records of Toti dal Monte. She has a good enough if not exceptional trill, a most attractively clear and bell-like legato, and I have yet to hear her sing out of tune. The general effect of her singing

perhaps most resembles the pre-war Hempel, but it seems a richer voice, though this may in part be due to the advantages of modern recording.

Musical intelligence is not normally a quality one expects in a high degree from a light soprano. Why this should be I do not know, and there are exceptions, of course, as to every rule. A survey of the Korjus records leads one to suppose that the brilliant Miliza herself is something more than a pretty warbler of Proch and the like. Her first two records (the only two on the English list) do not, it is true, take one much further than this conventional view, excellent though they are, within their limitations. The foreign record of the Chopin Mazurka and the orchestrally well-known "Invitation to the Waltz" of Weber do, however, show an excellent intention to get away from the hackneyed coloratura aria.

The Mozart record, not yet released over here, is different in quality, again. Musically, of course, it is the most considerable performance Korjus has given us yet, and it is interesting, too, for dramatic reasons. The singer has realised, as curiously few singers do, that it is not enough to peck with dainty accuracy at the formidable staccati of the Queen of the Night's great Vengeance Aria—it must be sung dramatically, if it is to make its full effect. Korjus is by no stretch of the imagination a dramatic soprano, but she cleverly gets almost the required degree of passion and intensity by adopting a slightly slower tempo than the usual, and by some small sacrifice of vocal purity. One imagines it is not a performance she would care to repeat, often, for the sake of her voice, nor would it, perhaps, come off without the microphone's amplifying aid, but as a record it may be counted a creditable success. On the back is Costanze's great bravura air "Martern aller Arten" from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, which is also given with the greatest possible abandon, and which does not call for so much sacrifice of purity to dramatic force.

It is this record, above all the others, which entitles us to expect great things of our new soprano. There is a high place waiting for the singer who can give us intelligent records of all the bravura airs of Mozart. Let us hope that Miliza Korjus may be she whom we seek.

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MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by COMPTON MACKENZIE

(Continued from page 344)

It was about this period that my first musical friends grew much excited over Tchaikovsky, and I well remember trying to discover the magic that was evidently distilled for them from the Sixth (or *Pathetic*) Symphony. It seems incredible to me when I look back at myself in those days that there really was once a period in which with complete sincerity I could say that I perceived no melody anywhere in the Sixth Symphony of Tchaikovsky; I seem to be confessing that about this time I was unable to perceive that sugar was sweet. How well I remember, on a dripping grey morning in February, a genuine Tchaikovsky morning, going to see an Irish friend of mine who was studying to be a professional pianist, and sitting patiently while he played over and over again the opening whine of the Sixth Symphony. I can hear him now.

"Do you mean to say you can't hear that it's a melody?" he cried, using every moment a richer brogue.

I shook my head.

"It's an affectation," he cried, "to pretend you like the *Waldstein Sonata* and say that you can't recognise the melody in that."

And off he went again, playing the phrase over and over with one hand in the treble. But it was no affectation. I was being perfectly sincere in declaring that I could not perceive the melody. That was in 1900; and I spent all the summer of that year in the heart of France, where I read more than 200 Tauchnitz novels and listened to the grasshoppers. But I never heard a note of music.

When I went up to Oxford, I had the inestimable advantage of finding myself in a musical set; but out of perversity, or simply because I was still actually unable to enjoy music, I gained nothing from my association. I would not join the Oxford Musical Club, where I should have heard good chamber music once a week; I would not go to Balliol Sunday evening concerts; I would not take advantage of the visits of great artists to Oxford. All this time music was just a bore. I remember that one somewhat musical friend of mine was always asking another of my very musical friends to play him the *Pomp and Circumstance* March of Elgar, and I remember the friend who was always being asked protesting at being made the exponent of such a cheap piece of melody, and I remember wondering to myself how on earth he arrived at finding something in which I could perceive no melody at all so obvious as to be cheap; but my heart was hardened and I was content to go on disliking music and taking no trouble to like it.

It is humiliating when I write these words to look back to that Oxford period and ponder on the wasted time and lost opportunities so far as music was concerned, because my perversity and silly complacent ignorance can never really be made up for by any amount of concentration now. It was the same with singing, which I could tolerate even less patiently than instrumental music. I suppose that the moment was not ripe, and it is idle to lament not having taken advantage of what did not exist. It is only now, when I try to reconstruct my musical life, that I perceive in what a desert I existed.

The only reminiscence worth recording of this period was of meeting Donald Tovey at lunch during Eights week, and of leaving soon after lunch because he was playing Beethoven sonatas to an enraptured audience; of returning to tea to find him still there, and of hearing with relief the proposal to go down and see the first division row at six o'clock, and then of finding that Donald Tovey was to come too. I can

see him now crossing the High and conducting an imaginary orchestra as he walked along, and I can see disapproving undergraduates with their relatives and friends turning round to stare at him in the sunlight of a May afternoon. I can remember wondering why we should be plagued with a musical genius during Eights week and if it would not be possible to stop his making such an exhibition of himself by conducting an imaginary orchestra and tooting to himself like a cracked French horn, and I recall my embarrassment and dismay when the ghostly *scherzo* he was conducting involved an unusual energy of movement and he nearly conducted a young woman's hat off her head as we passed along towards the barges. It is really lamentable that the whole of my musical life at the University should consist in retrospect of being bored by *Pomp and Circumstance* played on the piano, and of being bored by Donald Tovey's behaviour in public. I can remember picking up from a musical friend's mantelpiece a programme of the Oxford Musical Club and thanking God, with a shudder, that I was not like these musical people on reading that some trio or quartet of Beethoven would be the tit-bit that week.

Then I remember going up to Cambridge during the Long Vacation to play in a dialogue of Thomas Heywood, called *Worke for Cutlers*, which had been discovered in the library of Trinity Hall. The parts were Rapier, Sword and Dagger. I played Rapier and carried a genuine rapier of Elizabethan times, a tremendous weapon to manage gracefully, for it must have been more than six feet long. We performed the piece as a Pastoral in the Hall garden, and to help out the stilted old dialogue Mr. Dolmetsch was there with his orchestra. I believe that I was genuinely enchanted by the music, which was all of the period, and I was certainly enchanted by the antique instruments like the viola d'amore and viola da gamba, and the lute. When I got back to Oxford the following term I announced to my friends that at last I had discovered what I really liked in music; and I begin to wonder nowadays if some of my would-be extremely musical friends who affirm that they can only stand Bach are not really in the same development of musical taste that I was in when I was twenty, because so often when they are tackled one finds that they are not really musical, and that the pleasure they claim to be getting from Bach is only the pleasure of literary association, the same kind of pleasure that I got, and still get, from a pre-Raphaelite painting. Of course I am not referring to people who, having experienced all music, return at last to Bach; but I am always suspicious of perfect taste that has not been reached by leagues of bad taste. I do not believe that, unless one has at some time or another revelled in Macaulay's *Lays* or Longfellow's *Psalm of Life*, one can possibly enjoy the best poetry, except as snobs may enjoy the company of earls, or parvenus the best vintages of champagne. The way beauty reveals itself to mankind is the way the sun comes in winter-time, shedding for a brief moment a few pale rays, touching with indescribable magic the cold scene, and a moment afterward retiring behind a grey waste of clouds. Most of us have perceived in early youth the beauty of a line of poetry that is definitely one of the great beautiful lines in the literature of the world; but why that particular line should have been appreciated when others equally beautiful were passed over unheard by the imagination it would puzzle more than a Freudian to discover. And so with music; most of us can look back to something in great music that moved us before we were really moved by all great music as a matter of course; my own example would be that *Incarnatus* from the Mozart Mass.

The fatal thing that happens to so many people in the adventure of taste is the way they find that they suddenly like something which they remember was considered good some years before they liked it. What can I take as an instance? Let us say Rubinstein's *Melody in F*. Perhaps at an early age they have heard Rubinstein's *Melody in F* on the violin or violoncello or piano and were bored to death by it, whereas their parents or guardians hummed it on the way home from the concert. Ten years later, in their turn, they find themselves enraptured by the *Melody in F*, and in a burst of self-congratulation they fancy that they have achieved something and reached a landmark in their intellectual progress, and from that moment they are sorry for anybody that cannot be enraptured by Rubinstein's *Melody in F*. It is the same in literature and painting. For one's own pleasure I am sure that it is a mistake to have exquisite taste in all the arts. For the rest of my life I intend to be quite impenitent about music and painting, and never to allow myself to get beyond works of art that still delight me, though I know them to be far removed from the first rank. I have reached a standard in judging poetry which is like the top of a mountain above the level of perpetual snow in its discouraging and monotonous perfection. I pick up volumes by contemporary poets whom I have heard praised by people who ought to know better. I gather a handful of poems and carry them up to my mountain-top to compare them with the snow at the summit. But the artificial snow I have gathered melts in my hand long before I reach the summit. Yet what a great deal of harmless pleasure might be mine if I had worse taste and was not firmly convinced that great English verse died with Shelley! Even now, such power have daydreams to beguile the fancy, I sometimes picture myself at my bookseller's and there picking up on the counter some small volume and opening it and perceiving on the very first page an authentic line of great verse; I picture myself taking it home . . . but this is folly. Only the other day I opened one of our literary magazines and read a beautiful little poem. I was so excited that I went everywhere inviting people to come and read it, assuring them that at last there was a good poem in the ——. But when I had gathered a dozen unbelievers for this miracle, alas! it had a simple and natural explanation, for on turning the page I found that the poem had been reprinted from an Elizabethan manuscript. The poem was good enough, but the poet had been dust ages ago.

I found the same thing about gardening. I reached a point in gardening when the sight of a border of the latest delphiniums depressed me as much as the county of Surrey. The appearance of any rose except a natural species, of any tulip except a natural species, of any crocus except a natural species, made me feel ill. I revolted against my good taste, and I spent several years in trying to get back my bad taste in flowers, and now, thanks be to the merciful elasticity of Providence, I can once more enjoy tea roses and groups of delphiniums.

I do not fancy that I shall ever lose my bad taste in music, although I regret to say that I am beginning to find Puccini impossible. This is a sad business, and I grow to like Bach better and better every day. These remarks are out of order at the present moment. I ought still to be writing about a period when Puccini seemed to me as remote from any likelihood of ever being able to enjoy him as now seems Scriabine or Stravinsky.

When I left Oxford I went to live at Burford, where I spent a year in strict seclusion, only broken by going up to Oxford to rehearse and act in *The Clouds* of Aristophanes. The music for this was written by Sir Hubert Parry, and I believe that it contained some delightful parodies on modern music to accord with the spirit of Aristophanes' mockery of contemporary taste. It may have been my inability to appreciate the point of that music—that and the personalities of Sir Hubert Parry himself and of Sir Hugh Allen, who was

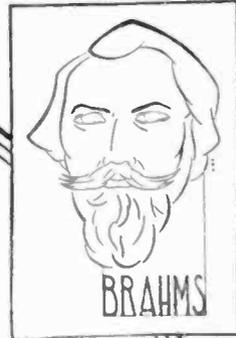
looking after the chorus—which made me wonder if it were not time that I applied some of my diversified energy to acquiring a taste and knowledge of music. I remember Sir Hubert Parry coming in to have tea with me one dusky afternoon. He was motoring down to Gloucestershire and stopped in Burford on the way. He sat down suddenly at the piano and began to play what I think must have been a skit on the music of Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*—or was that written by 1904? I know that we had been talking about Maeterlinck and that I had read him part of a parody I had just written, at which he had laughed heartily, something about the Princess Migraine and the Princess Phenacetine and Prince Cocaine, in which one of the characters had said portentously, "I think there will be a blue moon to-night," followed by a stage direction in brackets [*A blue moon rises*]. It was so cold in the hall of Lady Ham that Parry would not take off his fur coat, but sat thumping away on the piano and roaring with laughter at some musical joke, which, of course, I could not understand. It struck me then how kindly he had laughed at my jokes about Maeterlinck, and I felt ashamed that I could not appreciate *his* jokes. I believe that this was the actual moment when I decided that I had got to learn something about music. What a delightful man he was, and it was so surprising to hear somebody who looked and talked like an Admiral eloquent about music and literature. I wish I could tell this story better, but I have only the pictorial memory of his appearance to give, and if I had appreciated his musical joke what a much better story it would have made! *Verbum sapienti*, if any wise young man reads this paragraph. A friend of mine (he was George Montagu in those days) had taken another little house close to mine at Burford, and had imported the instrument, now I believe almost extinct, known as an Aeolian. To listen to the Aeolian being played was a torture; but I am sure that to play it, especially if one studied the rolls of music with the score, would teach one a good deal more about music than a pianola, which, after all, is not much good except for piano music. I was alone most of the time, for George Montagu only came down for week-ends, and I spent all my afternoons and evenings playing this instrument myself. It happened that there were complete rolls of the Third and Fifth Symphonies of Beethoven, and of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies of Tchaikovsky. Before that winter broke to spring I knew them backwards. That opening whine of the *Pathetic Symphony* with the vox humana stop pulled out would have moved a heart of stone. And to think that four years ago I had not perceived that yearning melody! It really is incredible. There was another roll which I played over dozens of times, Tchaikovsky's *Slav March*. I can still hum that through from beginning to end.

The *Eroica Symphony* was not so good on the Aeolian as the *C Minor*, and to this day I have never enjoyed the *Eroica* as much as the *C Minor*, which, as I played it over and over again on that ridiculous instrument, changed my whole musical outlook; and when in the following autumn I heard it played for the first time by an orchestra at a Promenade Concert, it changed, I believe, my whole outlook on art and life.

Reprint from THE GRAMOPHONE, November 1923.

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(To be continued)



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(These Elgar issues are dealt with in our Magazine for March.)

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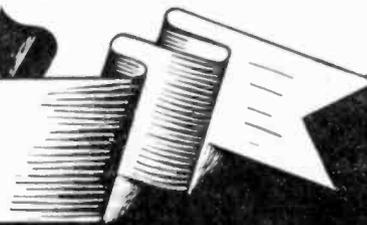
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ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

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



ORCHESTRAL

His Master's Voice

London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Koussevitzky :
Erioica Symphony (Beethoven). H.M.V. DB2346-51
(12 in., 36s.).

How is the second longest of Beethoven's symphonies got upon twelve sides? If I remember rightly, the last recording took fourteen : but I hope to compare the two, and possibly others, in a "Second Review" shortly. This one takes two discs to each of the first two movements, one side to the *Scherzo*, and three sides to the *Finale* : remarkable compression, on first sight.

First Movement.—Handsome shaping of the opening phrase catches the ear. So does the proud incisiveness. Mark a point (1 in. : bar 57) where the clarinets and oboes, one after another, go up the scale. Here, as always, they are masked by the descent of the basses. This wind figure is interpolated, strikingly, in the heat of the final rush, at bar 673. Nearly 700 bars to fill with heroism! With, too, a tincture of meditateness, or sadness, or what? Tovey speaks of a "cloud," at the start (the tenth bass note of the long theme, C sharp—bar 7—sets the harmony for it). There are others. This cloud leads, later, to a specially fine key-stroke at the beginning of the recapitulation (bar 400, about), where the jump from the E flat key to F is a real winner.

At 1½ in. there is one of this conductor's very few little excesses of emphasis (the only one in this work) in the pulling up. I feel that this slightly irritates, by, as it were, bidding us "Look!" at something we cannot miss; and the very characteristic Beethovenian pathos here (that rising figure, not in the top—flute—part, but in the oboe and clarinet—in two consecutive bars : a concentration of it) is sufficiently strong without a special pull on it. But this is a rich conception, and the really big conductor can be allowed a foible, which need not worry us, among the many boons he bestows. You can hear the parts distinctly, without feeling that one or the other is being dragged out, as so painfully happens with some we know. The last ¾ in. of side 1, where the first section passes into the development (and what ripe "passage work" is this), is a good instance. The rhythmic strength depends a good deal on not cracking up in those syncopations of which Beethoven was fond, and which he used so judiciously—unlike some composers with their favourite devices : ½ in. on side 1 is the first place. If we can get the tang of the original shock of 1803, all the better.

In the first inch of side 2, note how the syncopations are carried to a great height, and with what speed the scene is changed, at that lull, to bring in the new theme (middle of the side), which befits, in the sense it gives of profusion of powers, a movement so grandly spaced. I like the conductor's steady hold on the last half of side 2 : it is easy to work up factitious excitement, but the best stress is in the simplicity of the writing itself.

The recapitulation comes with side 3, and here is the magical key-change above referred to—from E flat to F : a flight from the key as soon as we have reached it! Then straight on to

D flat, before, at ½ in., we are back in E flat. The procedure remains one of Schubert's quick glances to leg. At the end of side 3 we might well wonder what he can do next. The opening—D flat again? No : C, apparently. We are to have more development in the coda—that's the big idea ; and it is one of the boldest ideas ever conceived—one that so marks out Beethoven as a giant, though Haydn, of course, had earlier spread himself thus.

It might almost be a new work we are hearing ; but the whole grows and coheres. At ¾ in. from the end comes the reminder of the oboe-clarinet ascending figure from 1 in. on side 1, mentioned above, which, in its scalic use, has been one of the elements of the music all through. I am grateful to Koussevitzky for a performance that is neither gaudy nor stodgy : pointed but not pronged : neither long-winded nor short-breathed.

Second Movement.—Again, tremendous scope : enough for two movements : the richest of all rondos. Never forget the difficulty of slow movements : keeping scale and size, and keeping the thing moving with emotion. That is where nearly all moderns fall down. It means, above all, no diffuseness. Here is one of the keenest of all tests of greatness. Without these qualities in his slow movements no man can be called great. There is here no strain in the performance, no solemnity that is not in the music's clean strength : the last half-inch, for instance, of side 5 is full of noble emotion if ever music was, and it is so because of under-statement rather than over.

Nothing is wasted : note the get-back to the march, at 2¼ in. on side 6—a few notes, and we are drawn irresistibly to the core of the matter : but a greater surprise comes, for the theme will not do : something tauter is wanted, and on side 7 we have it—a fugue, two subjects announced together ; here performed with splendid massiveness. I know nothing more magnificent than these eight pages : the seal of fate, in the fugue, then the attempted return of the march, the hesitation, the forbiddance, the downfall ; finally, the creeping back of the theme through the broken utterance of the strings. There is to be yet a deeper grief, tempered by comfort (middle of side 8). The end, with the theme vanishing, was a device used again in the *Coriolanus* overture, in 1807.

Scherzo.—Someone, in my *Musical Companion* competition, queried my defining this form as "a development of the Minuet, by Beethoven." In a glossary one cannot, of course, spend many words. Haydn *did* seek such a development, but it was Beethoven who founded a scherzo style that would stand up to symphonic size : in that sense Beethoven, not Haydn, is the inventor. Size is not necessarily based on length. This movement takes only one side, against the first two's four apiece. Nor is noise wanted for brightness. The strings are *sempre pp e staccato*. Koussevitzky keeps down the wind in proportion, so that the effect is less boisterous, superficially, than we sometimes get.

The horns in the trio are particularly ripe and velvet-coated. Just once there is a wrong note—side 9, 1¼ in. from the end : but who cares? Mendelssohn learned a horn tip from this section—remember the *M. N. D. Nocturne*. Professor Spalding, the excellent American commentator, finds in the D flat, D, E flat of the last few bars (425-431) an echo of the important C sharp and its following, at the start of the first movement (bars 7-11). This seems clear, but I had not noticed it before, nor does anyone else seem to have written of it. It is possible that the reference may not be intentional, but I doubt that. One can hear such a work for years and always be finding fresh interest in it.

Finale.—I have explained the structure in former articles—how the first tune is really to be a bass for the main tune, but

the upper one does not come until the composer has had some prim variation-fun on the bass: first in simple counterpoint, and then with the triplets scampering round it. It is only at side 10, 1½ in., that the cat (the main tune) is out of the bag. The next event of the movement is the fugue, on the bass (I have pointed out elsewhere how fugal the work is: a big element in its power). The tightening and loosening of tension are beautifully managed: note, e.g., after the start of side 10, the full-stop and fresh fugueing, the deftness of which is worth close analysis. I am reminded a little here of Mozart's amplitude (not his style) in the *Jupiter* finale.

In the last ¾ in. of side 10 comes that heavenly variation of the theme, in such leisuress as would almost make us think ourselves back in a slow movement. The orchestral tone here is entirely comforting. The big tune in the bass (the other bass having long done its work and gone home) is to be marked next—last, but for the coda, here, as before, important, not just a tailing off. We are reminded of the heroic stature of the music as a whole. The dimming to echoes is dramatic, too, before the last burst of pomp.

Every movement shows forth wonders. You can never exhaust the *Eroica's* riches. This performance helps us to explore them. It is suggestive, sufficient, sure: a real student's friend.

***Sergei Rachmaninoff and Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Leopold Stokowski**: *Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 43* (Rachmaninoff). H.M.V. DB2426-8 (12in., 18s.).

This set came to me in an early state, with written labels bearing only the title, without any particulars of performers. After a few bars of side 1, I said "Whoa!", took off the disc, and read the title again. It seemed all right: but the tune was so familiar. Then I realised that, though "rhapsody" strictly means a stitching together of songs, one can take an old song and stitch at it afresh, producing a new patchwork. This is what Rachmaninoff has done with the bare Paganini theme on which Brahms once executed virtuosities for virtuoso pianists. Here it is varied again, with formidable orchestral and pianistic decoration, recorded most powerfully and realistically: something to please lovers of high dexterity, on the one hand, and on the other (to a smaller extent, I think), those who like to see what can be said afresh on an old theme. The Op. 22 variations on the Chopin C minor Prelude set the type pretty well, though these Paganini ones present much more varied aspects of the chosen theme. The grave variation at the turn of sides 1 and 2 is characteristic. That element in Rachmaninoff (represented more fully in parts of the symphonies) is one that I find among his most appreciable traits. The driving force of the next (first half of side 2) goes further than the rather mechanical type of variation that many skilled men can turn out; and the next brings out the rhapsodical element more strongly, as well as the player's notable performing ability. The tune is no worse than many others taken for variations; but with a theme of this bare kind I think the finest results can only be got by pursuing Elgar's method, in the *Enigma*, and Rachmaninoff is not quite big enough for that. The style of the first new variation on side 3, for instance, does not say anything about the tune, the player, or pianism in general. It is just a routine variation, the sort of thing that any student would shove in. These routineries stand in the light of the better work. Immediately afterwards the composer gets under way again; but he is rather given to these weaknesses, and might cut with advantage. After all, six sides is a good deal for this work. He is heard, on the same side (3), with great pleasure, in a free, lyrical light-running variation, and then in one with a ghostly air and a shudder, which, with the meditative one following, show some of the best of his ideas in both sentiment and suggestive sombreness. These will remind many of his symphonic works. They do not say anything fresh, or throw further light on his nature, nor do they go deep. It is the

fact that he does not go too deep that has made Rachmaninoff such a favourite for the million. But he is not afraid to let himself go, to a particular length which admirably fits the British liking: not too far. Though reckoned a reserved people, we are not so simple or so unsentimental as some suppose us. Indeed, I think in many lights we are the most sentimental people in the world, next to the Americans, who easily carry off that palm.

The big, broad movement, in the vein that best matches up to Brahms, comes again on side 5. This is an aspect of craftsmanship in the composer which may have had less than its due praise. He has not Brahms's subtlety of detail, but he can carry us swirling down the stream with admirable impetus. There is nothing namby-pamby about him. A little humour, à la Dohnanyi, would improve the mixture. Side 6 winds up brilliantly (it is only about half filled: a cut or two would have acceptably brought the work within five sides). The finish has a great flare. The orchestra sounds rather coarse here, but the recording is otherwise exciting.

***Philadelphia Orchestra**, conducted by **Stokowski**: *Sarabande and Siciliano* (Bach). H.M.V. DB2275 (12in., 6s.).

Two more of the Stokowski arrangements, not this time so valuable, I think, though a good tune is always worth hearing. The *Siciliano* is described as from the C minor Sonata for violin "and cembalom"! I don't think Bach ranged quite so widely as this: the dulcimer-instrument is not meant: it is "cembalo," which seems to me a pedantic word, nowadays, when "harpsichord" will do as well, and be clearer to the plain man. The *Siciliano* is marked by a peculiar beauty of speculation, a type of musing that evokes a mood of curious elevation. I feel that the butter is laid on too thickly in the *Sarabande*, and the rhythm not sufficiently strongly, at any rate in the earlier part. As mere sound it is of course impressive, as is everything that Stokowski arranges; and that curious opening on a keynote pedal is especially dark. But there is some sentimentalising in the course of this lush performance.

***B.B.C. Orchestra**, conducted by **F. Busch**: *Symphony in C, K.425* (Mozart). H.M.V. DB2191-3 (12in., 18s.).

This is the symphony commonly known as the *Linz*, because it is presumed to be the one that Mozart wrote in haste when, being at Linz in 1783, and being desired to give a concert, he had not a work by him, and so wrote one "for dear life." The notion of a slow introduction is Haydn's: Mozart rarely wrote one: but, as Tovey remarks, this prelude is not one of those "avenues or tunnels" of expectancy that Haydn was so fond of making. It is "an architectural portico." There are many ideas, whose running together is particularly smooth and rich. The development, as such (side 2), is short, but there is so much going on before it that this does not seem a drawback. It all hangs together extraordinarily well, and this bright, clean performance abounds with the sense of well-being.

The slow movement (one disc, like the first) winds placidly, with a moment of deeper feeling now and again. At side 3, 2 in., you will find a touch of the tenderest meditative twinings in all this composer's work. The drums and trumpets in the middle part of the movement have a special weight, and the bass alone at the end of this side gives the music a poetic quality that looks within, marking the movement as one of unusual significance. Busch does not sentimentalise. It is for us to supply the right depth of feeling. The recording helps in all seemly ways.

The *Minuet's* trumpeting may be compared and contrasted with those of the slow movement. In the finale there is again ample material. The arpeggio (¾ in.), as a link, perhaps corresponds broadly with one in the first movement. The second main tune (¾ in.) is followed by some obviously strong-willed fugal-style matter. The blend of lightness and strength—steel tracery—in the movement is what makes it notable.

The winding-up of the exposition is on familiar lines, and the short development begins at $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. with that arpeggio figure link already noted at $\frac{3}{8}$ in. It will be felt that though the actual development is so small, the movement is not trivial: "It is not growing like a tree . . ." It is, rather, the ordering and proportioning of parts, the setting over against each other of the essential elements of force, swiftness, of light and heat, that fuses a work to power.

W. R. A.

Light Symphony Orchestra under Eric Coates: *Suite, The Three Men* (Coates) and *Valsette* from *Wood Nymphs* (Coates). H.M.V. C2722-3 (8s.). **Symphony Orchestra** under Eric Coates: *March* and *Valse* from *The Jester at the Wedding*. Columbia DB1505 (2s. 6d.).

There is nothing "light" about this orchestra, and a tipster would probably bet a considerable sum that it is none other than the London Philharmonic led by Paul Beard. If this is correct, here is a glaring instance of musical snobbery. Some time ago, Sir Thomas Beecham shocked a sedate "Phil" audience with *William Tell*, and it would do everybody a deal of good if this were followed by Mr. Coates' *Knightsbridge March*, also recorded, I understand, by our greatest orchestra. All Mr. Coates' work is thoroughly musicianly and there is no better orchestrator in England. *The Three Men* took some two months to score, and these records are magnificent. The last movement is based on the shanty *When Johnny comes down to Hilo*, the last line of which is identical with *Three Blind Mice*, with the result that the mice have been introduced in fugal form. This caused an amusing incident, which unfor-

tunately would be out of place in this review; indeed, these records raise many interesting points, but I must content myself with recommending them to all who admire skilful orchestration and first-rate light music. The two numbers from *The Jester at the Wedding* were made by a scratch orchestra of picked men, including the most distinguished names. The *Waltz* is good, but the *March* is disappointing, the recording being on a different plane altogether.

R. W.

Decca-Polydor

Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Kleiber: *Roman Carnival Overture* (Berlioz). Decca-Polydor CA8197 (12in., 4s.).

The music, written on themes from the opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, was originally intended as a separate overture.

The cor anglais solo is perhaps slightly larger than life: it is a difficult instrument to record, apparently. Here its plaintive timbre is not very prominent, but the tone is round and ripe. The treatment is on the slow side—slower than Berlioz' crotchet—52. It is slightly heavy too, and that defect is a drawback to the expressive power of the music, which comes from a love-passage (Benvenuto: "O Teresa, vous que j'aime"). Not quite *ben trovato* here, I feel. It needs more ardour. The saltarello is very clearly enunciated and rings very forwardly; again there is not quite a blaze, though the massiveness will be liked by many. I think the wind a bit heavy for the strings in the middle of side 2. The hall is not quite ideal for recording, I think. A fair performance, but not outstanding.

W. R. A.



CHAMBER MUSIC

***Quartet** (Harry Cumpson, Cyril Towbin, David Dawson, Carl Stern): *Pianoforte Quartet in C minor, Op. 60* (Brahms). Columbia LX365-8 (four 12in., 6s. each).

It does not do to take too seriously the odd things which composers often say about their music. Thus Brahms told a friend, with great gravity, that in listening to the first movement of this quartet he was to think of a man who was just going to shoot himself, there being nothing else left for him to do!

One of Brahms's most intimate friends said the movement was an "illustration of the last chapter about the man in the blue coat and yellow waistcoat," a remark the significance of which is lost on those of us who have not read Goethe's "Werther." Amongst these I must count myself, but I seem to remember that Werther shot himself.

First Movement. Allegro non troppo.

The music of the first movement does not make easy listening, it is true, but I doubt whether the above explanations will do anything to help! The only things that can do that are an intelligent examination of the score and repeated hearings. The opening octaves on the piano are forceful and there is grim intensity in the reply of the strings, softening only for a moment before the dramatic downrush of the C minor scale

which precedes the first subject. An original turn is given to the gracious second subject by Brahms making it the theme for a little set of variations.

Part II contains the finely imagined and wrought development section—it begins just before the close of Part I—and this part ends with the recapitulation of a few bars of the opening page of the quartet. This time there are a series of soft downward scales leading to (Part III) the entry of the second subject on the viola, the tune again being used for some more variations. It is only in the *Coda* that a full and passionate restatement of the first subject is made. The music ends in resigned mood.

Second Movement. Scherzo, Allegro.

Brahms never moves very easily in the world of the *Scherzo* and I think it is true that his *Scherzo* themes are not usually built for speed, though there is plenty of rhythmic subtlety in them. The present example is no exception. One feels that the music is driven along by sheer force and not by its intrinsic vitality. An enjoyable movement, nevertheless.

Third Movement. Andante.

Here the composer is indeed on his own ground and gives us one of his most beautiful tunes, which, unfortunately, is played in far too matter-of-fact way by the 'cellist, to whom it is first allotted. The middle section of the movement is at first curiously indeterminate, sounding as if Brahms is also here weaving a variation on the opening tune. The soft recapitulation (Part VI) in octaves on the piano, then on the violin, is lovely and fitly rounds off a beautiful movement.

Fourth Movement. Allegro commodo.

A movement of almost incessant activity and bustle on the piano, over whose hurrying music the strings interpose lyrical tunes. An effective and brilliant *finale*. The names of these players are unknown to me but they give a performance which, if lacking something in finish and point, is full of energy and decision. The first and last movements are played the best.

Some passages of the *Scherzo* are not clear and the blemish in the slow movement has already been noticed.

Owing to the exigences of suitable stopping places one or two of the records are rather short measure. The recording, revealing good tone and balance, is one all Brahmsians will wish to have.

***Pro Arte Quartet** (2nd viola: Alfred Hobday): **String Quintet in C major, K.515** (Mozart). H.M.V. DB2383-6 (four 12in., 6s. each).

Mozart's latest biographer, Henri Ghéon,* calls the great quintet in G minor (issued by H.M.V. last October and reviewed in THE GRAMOPHONE of that month) the "Quintet of Death," in allusion to the letter written from Vienna by Mozart to his father (April 1787), then lying seriously ill at Salzburg.

A fortnight after this memorable letter was sent Mozart finished the present string quintet, and a month later that in G minor.

Over both these works, therefore, falls the shadow of his revealing utterance: "Since death (if one looks closely at it) is the true end of life, I have, for some years past, so familiarised myself with that true and faithful friend of man that his image no longer frightens me but brings me peace and consolation! . . . I never go to bed without thinking that tomorrow (young though I am) I may no longer be here: and yet no one that knows me can say that I am depressing or sad in my conversation. I thank God every day for my happiness and cordially wish it for all my fellow creatures."

In his radiant joy of life, in his splendid awareness, without a hint of morbidity, of the inevitability of death, who spoke to him as the friend in Schubert's great song, we have the key to the exquisite balance of Mozart's art: the secret which prevents him falling into triviality, however well-worn the language he employs.

But in this quintet, as in the G minor, he is at the height of his powers, and I defy anyone of sensibility to hear this work without being moved to the core of his being. I will make no formal analysis of the music, but only ask the listener to appreciate in the first bars of the first movement the dramatic contrast between the 'cello tune and the one with which the violin answers. The position of these tunes changes, but the contrast is of the essence of the movement.

The sombre Minuet is music of the most profound originality, with a Trio remarkable for harmonic beauty and for a passage, once repeated, that almost brings tears to the eyes. In the third movement we find that continuous melody of which Wagner dreamed but never could pour out—and with such simplicity of means—in so profligate a rhapsody of lovely sound.

Whatever clouds have passed over the music are chased away in the happy sunshine of the last movement, which sets the blood tingling and the toes twitching.

As the last notes die away and I sit here thinking over this most exquisite work, I am reminded of Henley's best poem:

* "In Search of Mozart." Henri Ghéon. (Sheed and Ward.)

"So be my passing!

My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the West,
The sundown splendid and serene, Death."

Mozart indeed sang with the joyous abandon of the golden-throated lark, but a lark endowed with a human soul that taught him early how to suffer. I quote M. Ghéon again: "Anyone who believes with Wolfgang in goodness and justice, yet who loves the world and cannot help regretting it, has every right to rejoice and complain; he throws himself singing into the chasm."

Of the performance (and of the recording also) I can only speak in the highest possible terms. It is beyond criticism.

A. R.

INSTRUMENTAL

***Feuermann** ('cello): **Waltz No. 2** (Chopin—Op. 34) and **Serenata Napoletana** (Sgambati). Columbia LB18 (one 10in., 4s.).

The 'cello playing such music as Chopin's A minor waltz reminds me of nothing so much as an aged and unwieldy ballerina balancing herself precariously upon her points. Nor do all the liberties Feuermann takes with time and pitch render this arrangement acceptable. Very much the reverse. Suddenly to drop an octave or ginger up the speed sounds merely comic. We are not told who arranged this peculiarly pianistic piece or the dreary Sgambati *Serenade*, alleged to be Neapolitan, for the 'cello, but here is certainly a case for a merciful anonymity. The last piece is enlivened by an unexpected and heartrending whoop from the 'cello which almost makes the record worth buying. But

not quite. I am sorry that a 'cellist of Feuermann's attainments wastes his time in this way. His playing, well recorded, suggests that he found the task uncongenial.

***Solomon** (piano): **Fantasia in F minor, Op. 49** (Chopin), and **Two Studies in F major, Op. 25, No. 3, Op. 10, No. 8**. Columbia DX668-9 (two 12in., 4s. each).

According to Pachmann, who had it from Liszt, Chopin gave an explanation of the opening of this work which ran as follows. The composer was seated in melancholy mood one day at the piano. Suddenly there came a sinister tap on the door which (I quote Mr. Huneker) Chopin at once rhythmically echoed upon the keyboard, his *phono-motor* (italics mine) centre being unusually sensitive!

On Chopin crying "Enter" in walked Liszt, George Sand, Madame Pleyel, and others (the march motive). This disturbance sends Chopin into triplets and Sand, with whom—not for the first time—he has quarrelled, falls on her knees and begs for pardon—and so on.

Well, as we have seen in the case of Brahms's Piano Quartet in C minor, composers will have their little jokes and no harm is done unless we take them seriously.

Actually this splendid work is a lengthy and elaborate

improvisation, in which Chopin makes a prodigal use of fine, well-contrasted tunes. The only weak one is that marked *Lento Sostenuto* (on Part II), but it certainly affords the ear relief after the tempestuous climax preceding it.

The recitative passage towards the close of Part III leads to an unexpectedly tranquil ending. Solomon, escaping the usual fate of prodigies, has become a considerable artist and interprets the work with the tremendous force it can bear, but which at no time degenerates into mere note-slashing. The music is never allowed to meander—an ever-present danger in compositions of this type—and the climaxes are really thrilling. The two studies are also very well played.

The full round tone of the recording deserves special mention.

***Horowitz (piano): Thirty-two Variations in C Minor** (Beethoven) and **Organ Choral Prelude "Rejoice, beloved Christians"** (Bach-Busoni). H.M.V. DA1387-8 (two 10 in., 4s. each).

It is a pleasure to meet, in a bulletin that contains one of his too often recorded sonatas, a work by Beethoven very little played and certainly never before recorded.

One learns that Beethoven wrote over sixty compositions in variation form, many of these being mere pieces of occasion and considered by their composer unworthy of an opus number, others such as the *Diabelli* variations, the string quartets in E flat, A minor and C sharp minor being in the first rank of his works.

The present composition, on an original theme, often called *Chaconne* in C minor owing to its distant relation to that musical form, was written in 1806—a year which saw the publication of the *Eroica* Symphony, but little else of importance—and is, of course, not only an early but a minor work, having no opus number. The length of the variations, on an eight-bar theme which satisfies the requirements of a *Chaconne* by being in triple time and having a well-marked bass, may be gauged from the fact that the three sides of these 10-inch records hold respectively eleven, thirteen, and eight variations!

"In his early days," writes Sir Henry Hadow, "Beethoven's method of variation-writing was largely harmonic—expressing the melodic idea through chords, arpeggios, reiterated notes and points of colour." That is the method followed in this little work.

There is a slenderness of texture in some of the quick variations that gives place to a lyric tenderness, with hints of deeper things, in other slower ones; this tendency being especially noticeable in the major variation opening Part II. The whole composition is little more than a charming sketch-book of ideas and it is played by Horowitz with great neatness and dexterity, but without any attempt to read more into the music than is there.

Readers may like to know, for purposes of identification, that the Bach chorale arrangement is to be found in the seventh volume of the Peters edition of Bach's works and the nineteenth book of the Novello edition. Its title is *Nun freut euch, lieben christen g'mein* and the chorale tune "has nothing to do with the Advent hymn to which it is invariably sung in England."

Horowitz plays the prelude faster than it could ever be played upon the organ; and though Bach's rejoicing is exuberant enough—his joy-motive encircles the chorale throughout—this speed makes it a bit too much of a whoopee. It isn't Bach, but it is magnificent.

Backhaus: Sonata in C sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 (Beethoven), and **Pastorale** (Bach-Lucas). H.M.V. DB2405-6 (two 12 in., 6s. each).

At least five versions of the C sharp minor Sonata are already in existence and I cannot help feeling sorry that Backhaus has added yet another to the list and passed over the other number of Op. 27, in E flat, or the beautiful "Variation" Sonata in A flat preceding this, Op. 26, or the charming so-called "Pastoral" Sonata in D, Op. 28, the last two of which would certainly be popular recordings.

Of the present work Fuller Maitland says: "I can hardly think of any great player whom I have not heard in the C sharp Minor. The feeling of surprise when Bülow adopted so strangely deliberate a pace for the middle movement is one of the few emotions I can associate with any particular performance. Certainly the most amusing was that in His Majesty's Theatre, when Sir Herbert Tree sat at a dummy piano and was inspired by a limelight moon to the improvisation of this Sonata. I think there was a lady on the stage to whom the music was addressed."

It is not difficult to guess who the lady was or that when the inevitable Beethoven film comes along she will also be there on the screen. Theresa Brunswick will ever be associated with Beethoven in the popular mind as Caroline Esterhazy is with Schubert. The form of the sonata, styled *quasi una Fantasia*, is, of course, irregular and it is probable that Beethoven wished the music to be played without a break, as, indeed, he has explicitly stated in the first number of this opus, the Sonata in E flat.

We may therefore expect to find a unity of feeling in the whole work and I hope it is not too imaginative to discover it as follows.

First Movement. Adagio sostenuto.

The mood of one who has to make a serious decision. *Es muss sein*, as Beethoven himself wrote over his music on another occasion, "it must be." But it is noticeable that the melody above its constant triplet accompaniment fails to reach any point of cadence the first time it is heard, but fades away in *arpeggii*. At its second flight it falls to a full cadence in the appointed way and the *arpeggii* are clarified by the reiterated rhythmic figure, in the bass, which has dominated the whole. The decision has been faced and taken.

Second Movement. Allegretto.

There follows the usual reaction of relief characterised by the alternation of *legato* and *staccato* phrases, the emphatic syncopations which lead to the final cadence and their continuation in the Trio.

Third Movement. Presto agitato.

The battle joined. Those hammer blows of chords, the urgent haste of the music give a splendid impression of well-directed energy. The second subject has a fine onward march: and never a pause, except the one very early on in the music, is made until the recapitulation is due. (This starts on Part III.)

How Beethoven had grown above the stature of any other Sonata he had so far written is shown by the magnificent and dramatic *Coda*, anticipating at one point a passage in the first movement of the D minor Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2, which is no mere ingenious compression of what has gone before, but a genuine and splendid development of the musical thought.

Backhaus gives an extremely well-imagined and musicianly performance in which nothing is done for display, but all to show us the working of the composer's mind.

The way in which the tone is graded up to the highest point of the melody in the first movement, the whole balance of the parts, are things worthy of great admiration.

I am puzzled by his hurrying of the midway cadence in the second movement (bars 7 and 8 after the first double bar) as it seems out of proportion to the speed of the movement. The last movement is magnificently played, a model of interpretative skill.

The fourth side is filled with yet another recording of the same arrangement of the *Pastorale* from Bach's Christmas Oratorio as Hambourg played last month. As I said before, this is unsatisfactory as piano music, even though it is given here with artistry. What is the objection to one or two movements from the English or French Suites?

The piano tone is just ordinarily good as far as I can judge, but I should admit that my gramophone is not very kind to the piano.

Cortot (piano): Valses (Chopin). H.M.V. DB2311-16 (six 12in., 6s. each).

It was the passage of years that revealed to me a temperamental antipathy to Chopin's music, but I hear it always with admiration and with thronging memories.

As a pianist still in his musical 'teens, I recall the arduous and endurances of practising the *Valses*: as a young man, the enchanted beauty of *Les Sylphides*—I was present at the first performance—when the curtain rose on that never-to-be forgotten moonlit scene, and Njinsky and Karsavina interpreted in the dance the very soul of romanticism. Justly, one writes *Valses* and not *Waltzes*. The latter word is too beefy and beery, too Johann Straussian for the frail loveliness of Chopin's muse, and I regret it is used on the record labels! "Chopin," says a writer of the best modern history of music, whose judgments alternately exasperate and delight, "is the Rudolf Valentino of music, the musical personification of ideal love, of love as women would have it—chaste yet passionate, ardent yet tender, innocent yet understanding—hermaphroditic, sexless almost. This is the lap-dog Chopin, as Wagner, perhaps too contemptuously, called him, the Chopin of the *Valses* and the Nocturnes in particular."

Cecil Gray's pronouncement is not a dogma of musical faith to be accepted by all as binding—I can imagine many rejecting it with scorn—but it is excellent to be compelled to examine, from time to time, the love we bear a work; and nothing is better calculated to force us to a revaluation than a hostile judgment.

To the complete recordings of the greater, the essential, Chopin—the *Studies* (Backhaus), *Scherzi* (Rubinstein), and above all the *Preludes* (Cortot)—the very quintessence of Chopin's art—H.M.V. now add a complete recording of all the *Valses* except the posthumous one in E major. (Its companion in E minor is included.)

FIRST RECORD

Part I. *Valse in E flat major, Op. 18.*

Of the type called brilliant and reminiscent of end-of-term concerts at school. Cortot shows what an artist can do with unpromising material and there is a valuable lesson in observing his treatment of the repeated notes which open the *Valse* and which he makes part of the musical fabric and not a mere interpolation.

Part II. *Valse in A flat major, Op. 34, No. 1.*

Also a display *Valse*. It suffers from being rather undistinguished melodically, too long and repetitive, but there is much in the player's treatment that is worthy of admiration.

SECOND RECORD

Part III. *Valse in A minor, Op. 34, No. 2.*

This *Valse*, almost Schubert in its alternations of major and minor, has always been one of the prime favourites, and justly so. There is an exquisite melancholy in the opening strain, well offset by the warmth of the section in the major. The performance is beautifully balanced, as witness the brief treble and bass duet just before the *Coda*.

Part IV. *Valse in F major, Op. 34, No. 3.*

As happy and frolicking as the previous one is melancholy. The greater musical value of the last two numbers of this *opus* in contrast to the first is striking. Played with great dexterity.

THIRD RECORD

Part V. *Valse in A flat major, Op. 42.*

What glorious writing for the piano! We have all attempted this *Valse*, usually at an excessive speed that courts failure. Under Cortot's fingers the inner figuration supporting the melody has time to make itself heard. The recapitulation is even quite deliberate and only in the *Coda* does the player let rip for a moment.

Part VI. (a) *Valse in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1.* (b) *Valse in F minor, Op. 70, No. 2.*

I did not time Cortot with a stop-watch in the so-called "minute" *Valse*, but I am pretty sure he takes longer and thus is able to give in his well-poised performance an exhibition of clean finger work and the right value to the harmonic structure.

The spacing of the records calls for the presence of a *Valse* belonging to a later *opus*. It is a pleasant-sounding piece with a rather taking refrain in it.

FOURTH RECORD

Part VII. *Valse in C sharp minor, Op. 64, No. 2.*

Apart from the fact that the opening strain of this favourite *Valse* is hardly given enough breathing space at the cadences, one has nothing but praise for the performance. The quick section is beautifully done.

Part VIII. *Valse in A flat major, Op. 64, No. 3.*

Here romanticism gives place to a dramatic note and there is even some contrapuntal interest: but the end is disappointingly conventional.

FIFTH RECORD

Part IX. *Valse in A flat major, Op. 69, No. 1.*

Melodically a little dull but saved by a pleasant duet section.

Part X. *Valse in B minor, Op. 69, No. 2.*

If not one of the most popular, certainly one of the most beautiful, and here played with touching tenderness. Pianists, please listen to this one as a lesson in *rubato*.

SIXTH RECORD

Part XI. *Valse in G flat, Op. 70, No. 1.* *Valse in E minor (posthumous).*

Gay, not to say skittish, in its opening, but yearningly romantic in its second strain, this *Valse* is one of the most attractive of the set and is splendidly played. The posthumous *Valse* published in 1868, nineteen years after the composer's death, opens in a dramatic vein and is throughout of great musical interest. Indeed, it breaks new ground and reaches a higher intrinsic level than all the rest.

Part XII. *Valse in D flat major, Op. 70, No. 3.*

Quite unremarkable and sounding tame after the previous *Valse*. Nothing in it to dismay the Countesses!

"The undeniable technical shortcomings in Mr. Cortot's art," writes the music critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, "have always been felt to be largely compensated for by a finely sensitive and poetic personality." I have declared myself temperamentally antipathetic to the music of Chopin, but that sentence was written before I had listened several times to this whole series of *Valses* played with an artistry that a few technical lapses cannot mar.

I can honestly say that the experience was not merely thoroughly enjoyable, but also instructive and revealing. The records are an object-lesson in the difficult art of *rubato* alone. *Rubato* is not to be interpreted as wayward licence. Cortot remembers that Chopin not only kept a metronome on his piano, but said, "The singing hand may deviate from strict time, but the accompanying hand must keep time."

Cortot's splendid sense of rhythm carries us over weak places and never allows us to forget that there is an invisible dancer to the music. The recording, sometimes brittle, is on the whole so successful as to make one wonder if the player has forsaken a make of piano that has not recorded well in the past.

My last duty to the readers of this review must be to indicate what are the most desirable single records of universal appeal. Limiting them to three, they are as follows: Second record, DB2312; third record, DB2313; sixth record, DB2316.

Horowitz (piano): Etude XI pour les arpeges composés (Debussy), and (a) **Pastourel**, (b) **Toccata** (Poulenc). H.M.V. DB2247 (12in., 6s.).

After much girding at recordings of unsuitable arrangements and over-familiar music, it is a real pleasure to welcome this delightful record.

Far indeed from the world of Cramer and Czerny are the pianoforte studies of Debussy, but though they speak a different language they serve as practical a purpose and are much more interesting as music.

Indeed, were this piece merely called "Prelude" or some such title, one would not advert to the fact that such cool, limpid music, touched with phantasy, is intended to develop facility in the playing of *arpeggii*. Poulenc's *Pastourel* is in the style which he so often affects. A tune of frankly popular caste meandering pleasantly along is interrupted occasionally by sudden dynamic shocks: a kind of *sauce piquante* to ginger up the cold mutton! The *Coda* is formed by an acid incursion into the minor and two notes at the end which say "peep-o!"

The *Toccata*, brilliant after the manner of its kind, has an encore-bringing finale and happily rounds off a charming record which Horowitz plays *con amore* and in which the recording is exceptionally good. A. R.

Cyril Smith (piano): Staccato Study (Rubinstein) and **Viennese Dance No. 2** (Gartner, arr. Friedmann). H.M.V. C2725 (4s.).

Welcome to Mr. Smith, who has been such a good ambassador in foreign countries. He is one of our best native pianists, and although his recording of Rubinstein's study brings the inevitable comparison with Levitski's famous record, it is an excellent performance. The dance may annoy some people, but I find it wholly charming. Readers may remember it from one of Mr. Smith's broadcast recitals. Altogether a brilliant debut. R. W.

Franz von Vecsey (violin): Air on the G string (Bach) and **Nocturne, Op. 81, No. 3** (Sibelius). Decca PO5115 (10in. 2s. 6d.).

Though Mr. Vecsey's playing of the *Air on the G string* is so over-recorded as to make his violin sound like a 'cello, I think his playing of the beautiful tune, of which one can never tire, is rather hard and insensitive and not too cleanly phrased. Much better is his treatment of an attractive little piece by Sibelius—originally, I fancy, a piano work—in which the music has a touch of distinction which lifts it above the *salon* level.

L'Anthologie Sonore

Pauline Aubert (harpsichord): (1) Le Pendant d'Oreille. (2) La Noce d'Auteil (Antoine Dornel: vers 1685-1765) and **Tombeau en forme d'Allemande** (Jean Nicolas Geoffroy: vers 1700). L'Anthologie Sonore. A.S. 13 and 14 (one 12in. record).

The names of the two composers whose music is recorded on the latest "L'Anthologie Sonore" disc will not be found in *Grove*, and are probably unknown to any but a few musical researchers who have examined the manuscripts in the Paris Conservatoire from which these pieces are taken.

Both composers belong to the school of Couperin, with whose harpsichord suites we are tolerably familiar. But were this information not vouchsafed, the resemblance of the opening phrase of Dornel's "Earring" to Couperin's well-known "Sister Monica" is too unmistakable to be missed. The atmosphere of the ballet is absent from the *Tombeau en forme*

d'Allemande, as this movement became the musical counterpart of the funeral poetry of the sixteenth century, and so is grave and solemn. "*Oraisons musicales dédiées à la mémoire d'un ami, les Tombeaux sont des élégies plaintives pleines d'accents dramatiques.*" That is an excellent description of the piece.

(In modern times Ravel, it will be remembered, wrote a *Tombeau de Couperin* for the pianoforte (Decca LY6079, PO5088 and 5089), the orchestral version of which has also been recorded—H.M.V. D2073-4.)

No violence is done in the recording to the delicate tones and different registers of the harpsichord, which is well in focus and not in the least "banjo-ey."

I recommend this charming record with confidence, commending also the informative leaflet which accompanies it.

New Music Quarterly

Barrère Ensemble of Wood-winds (wind-quintet): Suite for Wood-winds (Henry Cowell, b. 1897)—(1) **Andante**. (2) **Choral**. (3) **Jig**. (4) **Allegro**—and **Suite for Wood-wind Quintet** (Berczowsky, b. 1900)—II **Adagio**, V **Allegro**. New Music Quarterly Recordings (one 12in., 2 dollars).

Neither of these composers can be said to be young men, which perhaps accounts for the fact that they write in a musical vocabulary that has quickly dated and, however it may sound to people unfamiliar with this idiom, is no longer revolutionary or advanced.

Cowell's "tiny movements constructed from Four Casual Developments, written in 1933 for clarinet and piano," are certainly of a mildly satirical nature and bear a relation to Arthur Bliss's more amusing "Conversations," whose disappearance from Columbia's catalogue I regret.

The tonality of these little pieces is very wayward, and the harmony of the kind which moves on several simultaneous planes; but if one's ear holds firmly on to the melodic line (or lines) and accepts the harmonic clashes as splashes of colour, there is quite a lot of enjoyment to be got (with a *soft-tone* needle) from this music.

The movements on the other side are of a more serious cast. The first, *adagio*, is a melancholy fountain of curious sounds, and the second, an *allegro* with a slow middle section of a very lugubrious and polytonic character, opens with a lively *cantus firmus* for the clarinet—and, at the recapitulation, the flute—round which, in various keys, the other instruments contrapuntally cavort! The way in which clarinet and flute stick to their guns is worthy of all praise.

The playing and recording are very good—the music is anything but easy to negotiate, I imagine—and I recommend the record to those of my readers who have a taste for modern developments and wish to further the gallant aims of this organisation. But do not forget the *soft-tone* needle!

Add Orchestral

Milan Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Antonio Guarnieri: **Overture to "Sicilian Vespers"** (Verdi). Parlo. E11266 (one 12in., 4s.).

None but the most sluggish could fail to respond to Verdi's superb sense of the theatre, finely evidenced in this overture. In the very first notes an atmosphere of suspense is created which almost conceals the fact that the music is merely a *pot-pourri* of airs from the opera, with the famous *O tu Palermo* shamelessly plugged on the 'cellos and the full orchestra!

For the rest, there are stirring drum rolls, alarums and excursions, which are given their full effect in this excellent and vigorous recording.

The opera has, I think, recently been revived with success in Germany and is again in the repertoire of the Italian opera houses. It says a good deal for the French audience that they warmly received the first performance of this work, commissioned for the Grand Opéra, Paris, in spite of its subject being the massacre of the French by the Sicilians!

A. R.



OPERATIC AND FOREIGN SONGS

MILIZA KORJUS (soprano), with Berlin State Opera Orchestra under **Franz Schönbaumsfeld**.—**Aufforderung zum Tanz** (Invitation to the dance) (Weber) and **Das Ringlein—Mädchens Wunsch** (The little ring—The maiden's wish) (Chopin); in German. H.M.V. C2721 (12in., 4s.).

Here is the third record by this delightful soprano, and, by comparison with the others, it is likely to prove disappointing; not because of any decline in the artist's skill, but on account of the music she has chosen and the accompaniments to it.

The *Invitation to the dance* is a vocal item superimposed on music written for the pianoforte and later orchestrated by Berlioz and by Weingartner. In this instance much of it sounds like vocal exercises in *all* associated with an obtrusive and none too refined performance of Weber's waltz. Chopin's song *Das Ringlein* has been popular with some well-known sopranos, notably Marcella Sembrich, who was fond of singing it in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, to her own accompaniment, at the conclusion of her alleged music lesson. From the gramophonic standpoint it is rather a novelty. It has a pretty melody à la *Mazurka* and affords Miliza Korjus considerable scope for indulging in dazzling *fioriture*, of which she takes full advantage; but here, too, the orchestra might with advantage have been less prominent.

HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS (baritone), with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under **Leo Blech**.—**Ave Maria** (Bach-Gounod); also, with same orchestra under **Alois Melichar**: **Agnus Dei** (Bizet); in Latin. Decca-Polydor PO5114 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

There are some good points to notice about this record. Though the actual singing is not impeccable, the voice is pleasant and well controlled and the diction is splendid. The interpretations, however, leave something to be desired. The *Ave Maria* is the better, but a total absence of rubato renders the performance monotonous; while the over-bold and rather "stagy" delivery, to a too rigid tempo, is hardly a fitting style for the lovely, devotional *Agnus Dei*. These are not among the German baritone's most successful efforts.

JULIUS PATZAK (tenor), with Berlin State Opera Orchestra under **Hermann Weigert**.—**Her eyes so alluring** from **Così fan tutte** (Mozart) and **Oh, loveliness beyond compare** from **The Magic Flute** (Mozart); in German. Decca-Polydor CA8196 (12in., 4s.).

It never rains but it pours and so there is no need for undue astonishment because a third excerpt from *Così fan tutte* calls for notice. It is the tenor aria, *Un'aura amorosa*, and it is sung in a German translation (there is more than one), *Der Odem der Liebe*. With this is paired the lovely aria from *Die Zauberflöte*, sung by Tamino as he gazes on the picture of Pamina, *Dies' Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön*.

The recorder has not been too kind to Herr Patzak in recording his voice so loudly; for the singer's fine voice is naturally large and robust and thus by its very nature not too easily attuned to Mozartian arias. Fortunately, Herr Patzak controls his voice with skill and is, in fact, a stylish artist;

so, having explained that it is necessary to reproduce the record with discretion, I feel that I can commend it with a safe conscience.

LINA PAGLIUGHI (soprano), with orchestra.—**Di piacer mi balza il cor** and **Deh! tu reggi in tal momento** from **La Gazza Ladra** (Rossini; text by Gherardini); in Italian. Parlophone E11267 (12in., 4s.).

The Editor's desire (Feb., p. 335) to hear an aria from *La Gazza Ladra* has been swiftly gratified; here are two arias for him, though not sung by the artist he mentioned. It seems fitting, therefore, that he should share what little knowledge I possess of the plot. It concerns a servant girl who has incurred the enmity of her mistress for falling in love with the latter's son, and who is sentenced to death for stealing a silver spoon that has actually been appropriated by a thieving magpie. Her fate is in the hands of a rascally minion of the law with the morals of a Baron Scarpia. She has an alibi, but cannot establish it without exposing her father, a deserter, to dire penalties. Ultimately both she and her father are restored to happiness. The opera was produced with great success at La Scala, Milan, in May 1817, when Rossini, although only twenty-five, was already the successful composer of *Tancredi*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and other works. For a serious opera it had a surprisingly "real life" story and an orchestral score of a complexity formerly unknown in an Italian work. It had a wide success, especially in France (it was based on a French play); but for years it has lain dormant. I hope it is not dead.

Lina Pagliughi does not sing with the ease and assurance, nor possess the polish and style of a coloratura soprano of the first water, but she is an artist of undoubted merit and I have listened to her with pleasure. The first aria has much in common with the familiar *Una voce poco fa*. It is florid but expressive, and, needless to add, melodious. The words are of the type that hack librettists of the period turned out with such facility. "Di piacer mi balza il cor . . ." begins the slow (moderato) section and "Tutto sorridere mi veggo intorno, più lieto giorno brillar non può . . ." suffices for the quick (allegro) finale; words that in some paraphrase or other have served for a good many of the older Italian airs. The second aria *Deh! tu reggi in tal momento* is a complete contrast to the first. It is a prayer, one of the first in the history of Italian opera; strictly speaking, it is a scene for soprano and chorus. The music is most interesting for what it suggests. It will be difficult, I think, for anyone to hear it without recalling to mind Chopin's *Funeral March*. It also reminds me of Schubert's song *Der Wegweiser* and, for a few bars, the *Madre, pietosa Vergine* of Verdi's *Forza del Destino*.

I place this record first in my list not so much because of its intrinsic merits (which are considerable), but because it is the most interesting record in my batch; and I hope it will be well received. A hoard of buried treasure lies hidden amid the ruins of dead operas; perhaps the appearance of this record may stimulate others to follow the excellent example of Signora Pagliughi and enlarge their repertoires.

INA SOUEZ (soprano), with orchestra under **Clarence Raybould**.—**Come scoglio** (firm as a rock); and, with **HEDDLE NASH** (tenor), **Fra gli amplessi in pochi istanti** (all too slowly the hours are fleeting); both from **Così fan tutte** (Mozart; text by da Ponte); sung in Italian. Columbia DX671 (12in., 4s.).

Così fan tutte (all women do so) is such a sparkling and delicious comic-opera that it is hard to understand why it has been so much neglected. In recent years, however, there have been welcome signs that the work is to receive the recognition it deserves. If this record is your introduction to the opera, please bear in mind that it by no means reflects its delightful comedy atmosphere. The light and dainty overture is a much more reliable guide.

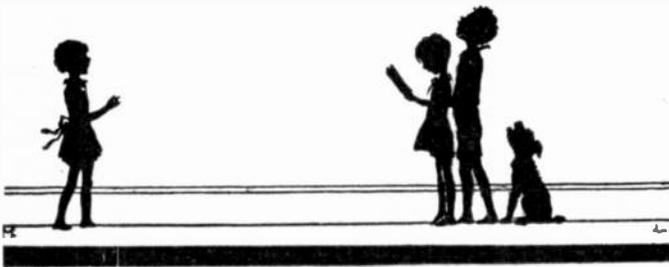
I had no opportunity of visiting Glyndebourne last summer and so it is a pleasant surprise for me to hear Ina Souez singing Mozart so excellently. Heddl Nash I have often heard in opera, including *Don Giovanni*, and I do not think he does himself full justice in his share of the duet. Part of the music seems to have been too high to be comfortable, or maybe he made a rather weak start and then recovered. It is, however, only a slight defect to a record that can be cordially recommended.

***PETER LESCENCO** (baritone), with **Frank Fox** and his orchestra.—**Buran** (Russian Folk Song) and **Bessarabi-yanka** (Bessarabian Folk Song); in Russian. Columbia DB1513 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

It is nice to end with something bright and cheerful, even if it be the result of a lucky accident. Accident, for I am sure I should never have had this record; and lucky, for me, because it has cheered my existence for a little while.

Have you heard a lively Russian air from a Balalaika orchestra? If so, you will have a good idea what to expect from this record: two jolly songs, rendered in capital fashion by their arranger, Peter Lescenco, with the assistance of an excellent light orchestra. *Buran* is quite a rollicking affair and the vocalist's efforts suggest that, were all else to fail him, he would do well as a milk roundsman in any district where street cries were not frowned on too severely. Seriously, though, this record can be cordially recommended as a very pleasant pick-me-up.

H. F. V. L.



SONGS

Ballads

Curls, muffs, feather-boas and ballads. Full circle and here we are again almost where we were when King George came to the throne. Whatever doubt there may be as to the survival of curls, muffs and boas beyond the Jubilee, it is pretty certain that the ballad has come to stay, for a while, at any rate.

The majority of records that have come my way this month are ballads, and a fine collection they are.

John McCormack sings Eric Coates's *A house made for you and me*, and Hadyn Wood's *The quietest things* (H.M.V. DA1393), **Harold Williams** sings *If I might come to you*, Weatherly's words set by W. H. Squire, and *In an old-fashioned town*, also by Squire. (Col. DB1507.)

Ashmoor Burch is another artist who can sing a ballad as if he meant it. *With a Smile and a Song* (Sievier-Wood) has a cheerful marching lilt, and *The Pavement Artist* (Jenkins) can be counted as a ballad though it does jazz up in the last verse. (H.M.V. B8287.)

Two German ballads are delightfully sung by **Richard Tauber**, *The Forbidden Song* by F. Gumbert, arr. Hornek, and *Hermann Levi's The Last Greeting*. These have an orchestral accompaniment. (Parlo. RO2070.)

The Russians have done it again. This time the tenor **S. Danilewsky** charms with an old gipsy romance, *Tell me you*



BAND RECORDS

Sing as we go from the recent film of Gracie Fields makes an excellent march, crisp and light-footed, and Mr. Conway Brown has made an admirable arrangement for military band which is now issued by Columbia (DB1506). The **B.B.C. Wireless Military Band** are in excellent fettle in this and also in *Ship Ahoy*, a medley of songs, on the reverse. Do not be misled by the title. *Ship Ahoy!* is not one of the dreadful descriptive pieces that often go under such names as this. It is an honest-to-goodness march composed of such tunes as "All the nice girls love a sailor," "Lads in Navy Blue," "Ship Ahoy!" etc.

St. Hilda's Band is still a fine combination, but neither material nor recording are of the highest class in Solox SX115. The recording is somewhat blatant and coarse and also sounds rather strangled in places. *Le Grandier March* is very dull and ordinary, and though *Enchantress March* is much more elaborate it is little less dull. Altogether a disappointing record. W. A. C.

love me. With him is the Tchernoyaroff Balalaika orchestra, beloved of Montparnasse. Tchernoyaroff was an officer of the Russian Guards who, while a refugee in Jugoslavia some twelve years ago, started his band among his fellow refugees, most of them trained musicians. Now they are established favourites in Paris. Danilewsky must be forgiven for singing the overworked *Black Eyes* on the reverse. If you listen, you will see why.

In Turkestan sung by the **Kardosch Singers** is one of the most amusing bits of harmonising I have yet heard—extremely clever. This combination invites comparison with the Comedy Harmonists and neither suffers by it. *The Song you alone can sing* is lovely. (Parlo. R2036.) Both are in German.

The Cuckoo

Two records difficult to get, and therefore all the more desirable, deal with this traitorous bird. **Eleanor Evans**, the distinguished Welsh singer, has recorded for the Concert Music Shop in New York three songs in her native language, *The Bells of Aberdyfi*, *The Early Dawn*, and *The Cuckoo*. Miss Evans learnt most of her folk-songs from her grandmother and few that she sings are found in print. She wins first prize at every Eisteddfod she attends, and is a recognised authority on Welsh music. Add to all this that she has a charming voice and it will be realised that this record is worth taking a little trouble about. 1051 Lexington Avenue is the address of the Concert Music Shop, and the price is \$1.50.

Anthologie Soncre: Le Chant des Oyseaux

This record is not really difficult to get, now that an agency has been established in London (see "Table Talk"). Clément Janequin wrote the music, an unknown writer the enchanting words. Janequin was the founder of the French song of the early sixteenth century, and if this exquisite and amusing piece of polyphony is typical of his genius, let us hope M. Sachs will let us have some more. The admirable *chanterie*, with delicious bird-song, is appropriately directed by M. Henry Expert. F.

MISCELLANEOUS

Before dealing with the month's records in the usual classified way, I want to draw your attention to a magnificent piece of record-making on Columbia DX670 (4s.). This contains an abridged version of one Leslie Baily's Scrapbook programmes—one of the most popular of broadcast features. The one recorded is for 1910, and constitutes a topical record for the forthcoming Jubilee. It is presented by Mr. Baily and Major Brewer of the B.B.C., and carries a special silver label; the compère is Patric Curwen. Against a background of popular music of the period, we hear a message from Conan Doyle, a vivid description of Grahame-White's £10,000 air race, and a superb reconstruction of the capture of Crippen on board the liner *Montrose*. The record ends solemnly with the death of King Edward and the succession of King George. This is undoubtedly the record of the month and should go into every home where there is a gramophone.

Coming to more routine matters, the **Commodore Grand Orchestra** under **Harry Davidson** play a somewhat cut version of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* in an arrangement by Weninger on Regal-Zonophone MR1594 (1s.), the second side containing some virtuoso flute-playing, but you must keep a sharp ear for this. **Debroy Somers** has deserted Savoy Opera for more recent tunes, and on Columbia DX673 his band is conducted by **Horatio Nicholls** in *Memories of Horatio Nicholls*, which, although a rather brassy performance, emphasises our debt to Mr. Nicholls for some of the best latter-day samples of popular music. From Eastbourne comes **Leslie Jeffries** with his Grand Hotel Orchestra in *Musical Comedy Gems from The Merry Widow, The Count of Luxembourg, The Desert Song, Bitter Sweet and White Horse Inn*. A quiet record. (Parlophone R2034, 2s. 6d.) **Edith Lorand** provides a Continental novelty in a pot-pourri from a work called *Gasparone* by Millöcker, of which I know nothing. Try it. (Parlophone R2035, 2s. 6d.) The less adventurous will prefer the **Orchestra Mascotte** in two Strauss waltzes, one old and one new, *Roses of the South* and *Enjoy Life*, on Parlophone R2038 (2s. 6d.).

Albert Sandler with his Orchestra have made a record of *Vilia* and the *Merry Widow Waltz*, which should sell in thousands. Comment is unnecessary. (Columbia DB1484, 2s. 6d.) Back in the dance hall we find **Jay Wilbur** in a lively selection from *Dames*, backed by *She Loves Me Not* on Rex 8394 (1s.). This has a female harmonised vocal as in the same band's Silly Symphony Selection of last month, which I hope everybody heard. With regard to accordeon music, Primo Scala must stand down this month in favour of **Billy Reid**, who in *Billy Reid Rambles* gives a thoroughly satisfactory selection of a few hits on Panachord 25684 (1s.). The same band is heard on 25683 in *She Fell for a Feller from Oopsala* and *If I Have My Second Time on Earth*, where the verses are divided among different nationalities. However, Mr. Scala deserves a mention for a praiseworthy *Selection of Harry Lauder's Songs* on Rex 8397 (1s.).

The **London Piano-Accordeon Band** under the direction of **Scott Wood** play *Rain* and *Sleepy Time in Sleepy Hollow* on Regal-Zonophone MR1593 (1s.). Mr. Wood introduces a

marimba, but it must be mentioned that *Rain* is not the tune of that name which swept London a few years ago.

There is a delightful record from the **New Mayfair Orchestra** of a selection from *Toad of Toad Hall*. The music is by Fraser-Simson and is wholly charming. Moreover, the recording is superb. (H.M.V. C2724, 4s.)

At the head of the vocal records is a bunch of three from H.M.V. containing some numbers from "Jill, Darling" sung and played by the original theatre artists. On B8277 is **Frances Day** whispering *Pardon My English* and giving a commendably ghoulis performance of *Dancing with a Ghost*.

The former will keep you busy for some time, while the latter has the true Ellis touch. On B8278 she is joined by **Arthur Riscoe** in *I'd do the most extraordinary things and let's lay our heads together*, in which Mr. Riscoe shows himself to be an ideal recording artist. Lastly, on B8279 **Louise Brown** and **John Mills** sing the slick *Nanny Nonny No* and the popular *I'm on a See-Saw*. All accompaniments by **The Saville Theatre Orchestra** under **Francis M. Collinson** and all at 2s. 6d. each.



Layton and Johnstone

Going back a few years, there is an excellent if unusual vocal selection from *The Vagabond King* by **Bernice Claire**, **Carol Deis** and **Mario Cozzi** with Concert Orchestra and Chorus under the direction of **H. Leopold Spitalny** on Decca K739 (2s. 6d.). The American accent may upset some people, but the singing is good. To those who enjoy operatic tenors in film theme songs, I warmly recommend **Joseph Schmidt** in *Lisetta* and *Tiritomba* from "The World Belongs to the Young" (I wish it did). The latter is an arrangement of an Italian folk-song, but Herr Schmidt chooses to sing both in German. He is much better recorded than heretofore and will please numbers of people. (Parlophone R2032, 2s. 6d.) For others there are **Layton and Johnstone** in an ideal performance of *Stay as Sweet as You Are* on Columbia DB1514 (2s. 6d.). The backing is *I only have eyes for you*, not very suitable to their methods. **Leslie Hutchinson** springs a surprise with *Back to those happy days*, which is the sort of song you would expect to hear from Miss Fields. Those who are tired of whimpering might sample this. If they don't like it, there is consolation on the back—a typical number called *Maybe I'm wrong again*. (Parlophone R2045, 2s. 6d.) Mr. Hutchinson also comes out with a song from Hassard Short's "Stop Press" called *You and the Night and the Music*, an exceedingly effective number. The reverse contains *Blue Moon* by Rodgers, composer of the popular *Blue Room*. (R2044, 2s. 6d.)

Meet **Mabel Wayne**, the world's nursemaid, inventor of *Little Man*, *You've Had a Busy Day*, and *H.M. the Baby*. Here she is on Columbia DX672 (4s.) in *Some of My Songs*. We must not forget that Miss Wayne also wrote *It happened in Monterey* and *Ramona*. She is assisted here by violin and 'cello, but this is insufficient; she should have engaged a singer.

Carson Robison walks away with the hill-billies this month in *The Runaway Train* and *Smoky Mountain Bill*. Even those who are sick to death of such things should hear this, because it is original, and originality in hill-billies is something to shout about. (Solex SX139, 1s.) Newcomers in this department

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The Moon was yellow Good-bye
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When My Ship comes in

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HEAR WHAT YOU LIKE — WHEN YOU LIKE

are **The Girls of the Golden West**, who have nothing to do with Puccini, being in actual fact the Misses Dorothy and Mildred Good. They conform to the accepted style in *Old Chisholm Trail* and *Little Old Cabin in the Lane* on Regal-Zonophone MR1597 (1s.), while on 1596 **The Hill Billies** themselves tell you of *Lily Lucy Lane* and of what happens *When the Curtains of Night are Pinned back by the Stars*, a title worthy of Darwin in its length or of a Government Blue Book in its authority. **Jimmy Rodgers** turns up with his guitar on Regal-Zonophone MR1599 (1s.) in *The Mystery of Number Five*, which is quite attractive in its lazy way. *I'm lonesome too* has some good guitar-playing, but is an uncomfortable song.

The pianists are disappointing. **Charles Kunz** plays his thirteenth medley on Sterno 1561 (1s. 6d.), and whether the superstition of the unlucky number has anything to do with it or not, he has only succeeded in being dull. Isn't this excessive use of the soft pedal played out by now? You would have thought that **Patricia Rossborough** would have done something with *Dames*, instead of which she simply plays the chorus through until her inches are filled, but she brightens a little on the other side in a Selection from *Here is My Heart*. (Parlophone R2043, 2s. 6d.) A few months ago I was delighted to welcome a recording of Louis Alter's *Manhattan Serenade*, which Messrs. Lyons seem to have adopted as their theme song. Well, it never rains but it pours, and here are **Fray and Braggiotti** back on Brunswick with a piano version cut to one side, and backed by an arrangement of the traditional *Dark Eyes*. Neither of these is wholly successful, but these pianists are always interesting, and above all musicianly. Every record they make is at least worth hearing. Only this morning I played their *Yankee Doodle Variations* to one of the most distinguished figures in our musical life, who was amazed at their subtle insight into the minds of different composers. Their number here is 01886 (2s. 6d.).

Although the music is cut, **Marcel Palotti's** organ record of the *Faust Ballet Music* achieves what it sets out to do and can be recommended. (Parlophone R2037, 2s. 6d.) Blackpool will fall for **Reginald Dixon's** *Blackpool Switchback*, containing the fourth of his "Classics of Jazz" series on Regal-Zonophone MR1595 (1s.), while **Sidney Torch** gives full value in his *Torch Song Parade* on Columbia DX674 (4s.). Both these organists avoid any overdue sentiment. Incidentally, Mr. Dixon has recorded Ewing's *Classica* selection on Solex SX135 (1s.). You will have to guess the tunes, but they are all easy ones. Rex 8403 (1s.) is a jolly affair with **Jack Simpson** ("famous xylophonist of Jack Payne's Band") in a *Communityland Medley* with orchestra, while on 8401 a *Street Barrel Organ* and *Accordeon* are heard in *Kerbstone Memories* with vocal interruptions. This is an honest-to-goodness record which will please many. **Ken Harvey** provides the greatest instrumental record of the month. His playing on the banjo is something colossal. On H.M.V. B8289 (2s. 6d.) is *A Medley of Popular Tunes and Southern Medley*. The former is made up of the stalwarts of the jazz era, and I beseech all who admire virtuosity in any form to hear this record.

Tessie O'Shea is so brilliant on Panachord 25686 (1s.) that were it not for the Jubilee record already mentioned this would have been the record of the month. I know that this sort of thing is not everybody's meat, but those who enjoy irresponsible gaiety should make a point of hearing *He does it* and *That Kruschen Feeling*. **Hugh E. Wright** burlesques a running commentary on a Test Match on Columbia DB1511 (2s. 6d.). Perhaps this is more of an imitation than a burlesque, and if you smile at the real thing, you will certainly



Norman Long

smile at this. **John Tilley** reminds us of A. J. Alan in a few words on *Cycling*, but can make little of Cole Porter's *Missus Lowsborough-Goodby* on Columbia DB1508 (2s. 6d.). **Cole Porter** himself has this number on H.M.V. B8284 (2s. 6d.), backed with *Two Little Babes in the Wood*. Many will be glad to have a record of this purveyor of bitterness, and nobody could have sung these with more point. The maliciousness of the latter song is reminiscent of "Mr." Flotsam, whose *Alimony Alice* will, I hope, be recorded at once. In my view, the miserable support given to Flotsam and Jetsam is one of the major tragedies of modern entertainment. However, **Norman Long** is still with us as one of the few remaining entertainers "at the piano," and he has a good song in *S-M-Y-T-H-E* on Columbia DB1510 (2s. 6d.). It is not generally known by the present generation that Mr. Long was the originator of that classic song *The Other Department, Please*. I hope he will record this. **Bobby Howes** is undistinguished in *Pop! goes your heart*, but has an original song in *London on a rainy night*. Both are beautifully accompanied. (Columbia DB1509, 2s. 6d.) This month **Murgatroyd and Winterbottom** can be recommended without reservation to all those who revel in good punning. *Music and Grub* are on Parlophone R2039 (2s. 6d.).

Leslie Holmes is quite irresistible in *Dames*, and however objectionable you may think this song, Mr. Holmes wafts sweet innocence over the whole business. The backing is *Things are looking up*, a band accompaniment, and there is a neat piano piece. A jovial record. (Rex 8400, 1s.) **Leonard Henry** is disappointing in *Henry the Ninth* and *I must have one of those*, which is a pity because the latter title leads one to expect something brilliant, which is only achieved in the last line. (Solex SX125, 1s.)

The next two records raise a problem. The first is a reissue of *Abdul Abulbul Amir* and *A Gay Caballero* on Decca F5385 (1s. 6d.), sung by **Frank Crunit**. The point is that the first song is ascribed to Mr. Crunit, whereas most of our parents were singing this before we were born. Mr. Crunit is not a young man and there may be no deception, but he has made the song his own and it is difficult to believe that he contributed this number to the Scottish and other Students' Song Books. Needless to say, he sings it with his usual magnificent nonchalance. The other is **Fred Hillebrand** assisted by the Cavaliers in *The Drunkard Song*, which turns out to be nothing more nor less than *There is a Tavern in the Town!* Incidentally, I had a rude awakening the other day. Having a reputation for a puritanical outlook on entertainment, I was surprised to find that my "record of the month" for January had been banned by the B.B.C. Hence I am shy of recommending another piece of debauchery, but I think we are safe here. At the same time, one wonders how many more excerpts from "Gaudeamus Igitur" will be purloined by entertainers hard put to it for ideas. (Panachord 25689, 1s.)

In view of the imminence of St. Patrick's Day, Irishmen will welcome a convivial record from H.M.V. (C2726, 4s.) of *St. Patrick's Night* by the Sketch Company. This is a fine piece of recording, and even Englishmen will enjoy the singing. On Regal-Zonophone MR1600 (1s.) **Dennis O'Neil** sings *A Little Bit of Heaven* and *Phil the Fluter's Ball*. How many people know the identity of the composer of the first of these? It happens to be Mr. Thalben Ball, choirmaster and organist at the Temple Church, who has given us so many fine records of English Church music. Thus are fortunes made! The other song has long been a favourite both sides of the Channel.

ROGER WIMBUSH.

DANCE RECORDS

RECORDS OF THE MONTH

The five outstanding records this month are *Congratulate Me* and *Rock and Roll* played by **Ambrose and his Orchestra** (Decca F5398), *Blue Moon* and *Down t' Uncle Bill's* played by **Frankie Trumbauer and his Orchestra** (H.M.V. BD119), *The Dashing Marine* and *Oopsala* played by the **B.B.C. Dance Orchestra** (Columbia FB1018), *Fox-Trot Medleys Nos. 3 and 4* played by **Harry Roy's Tiger-Ragamuffins** (Parlophone F115), and *Dulce Mujer*, rumba, and *Vengo por la conga*, conga, played by **Don Barreto and his Cuban Orchestra**.

I select the Ambrose recording as outstanding more because of its consistency than because of the brilliance of one side or the other; as a dance record it is superb; no one artist of this band of stars obtrudes himself, but all work together to make the record a perfect example of a really danceable record. *Rock and Roll* is taken a little faster than *Congratulate Me*, but both go with a terrific swing. **The Rhythm Sisters** do good work in both, and **Sam Browne** sings with them in *Rock and Roll*.

Frankie Trumbauer's name is a guarantee that any record bearing it will be interesting and probably first-class. *Blue Moon* is the tune of the month, at least it is No. 1 in America, and presumably the publishers hope it will be here. There are several good recordings of it, but this one is outstanding by reason of the exquisite playing and elaborate arrangement—perhaps a little too elaborate for some people—and the backing is that jolly tale that the Dorsey Brothers told so well last month. Both tunes are played with understanding of their requirements and the ability to meet those requirements.

The **B.B.C. Dance Orchestra** is included in this august selection on the grounds that the record is of tunes that they have broadcast and made popular, and are here reproduced exactly as every listener has heard them. This may be a condemnation to some, but will certainly be a recommendation to others. *Oopsala* is one of those absurd tunes that intrinsically is absolutely valueless, but amuses you and gets on your brain. The tale of Marie and the Dashing Marine is a Frank Crumit epic. The vocalist **Len Bermon** is commendably clear. **Harry Roy's Tiger-Ragamuffins** may be scamps and rascals on the music-hall, but they know their stuff, and these two *Medleys* of jazz classics in (a) fast and (b) slow tempo are dance records that will appeal to everyone who likes something more than the tune of the moment; this is a record that you can enjoy as long as you keep it in your library.

The last record in this section is unusual. The rumba is the genuine thing with all the tin cans, bones, gourds and other appurtenances that go to make the modern savage of Cuba's music. About three-quarters of the way through the pace suddenly increases, and one can picture the dancers becoming more and more excited until they drop exhausted at the end. The conga is even more primitive and exciting and both tunes will rouse you out of that after-dinner lethargy that the average dance tune only encourages.

These unusual records are a most welcome change from the ordinary commercial titles and the companies should be encouraged by the welcome they receive into letting us have a regular supply.

OTHER OUTSTANDING RECORDS

The Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra.

Dancing with my Shadow and *Don't let it bother you* (Brunswick RL205). First tune very popular, easily best recording of it, taken in leisurely tempo but very artistic. *Don't let it bother you* sprightly and stylish with vocal trio "hot-cha-cha"-ing.

Lew Stone and his Band.

Pop! goes your heart and *Beauty must be loved*, both from the film "Happiness Ahead" (Regal-Zono. MR1580). Best, by a short head, recording of *Pop! goes your heart*, big hit from the new Dick Powell film, which also marks first appearance of new American star Josephine Hutchinson. Coupling sweet and lovely.

Harry Roy and his Orchestra.

Pop! goes your heart and *A-hunting we will go* (Parlophone F114). Next best recording of "pop" song and backing typical jolly riot which admirers of band will like.

The Snake in the Grass and *Home, James* (F111). Good comedy coupling with new lights on the *Home, James* story.

Easter Parade and *You and the night and the music* (F112). Best recording so far of best tune in new Adelphi revue "Stop Press." Both Irving Berlin masterworks and imported from New York and destined for great popularity.

Carroll Gibbons and the Savoy Hotel Orpheans.

Missus Lowsborough-Goodby and *How am I gonna keep the news from Mother?* (Columbia FB1020). Former new Cole Porter satire to follow Miss Otis. Vocalist manages to get right atmosphere and music gets the best out of the tune, which is quite good, but the words are the thing. Backing rather stupid and clumsy idea but retrieved from mediocrity by musicianship of band.

Whisper Sweet and *How can you face me?* (Columbia FB1021). *Whisper Sweet* one of the best tunes of the month, excellently sung by **Anne Lenner** with nice swing support from band, and, of course, pianist's rhythmic interpolations. Backing good, but not such useful material.

Geraldo and his Sweet Music.

In the quiet of an autumn night and *Here is my heart* (Columbia FB1016). Sweet music at its best with real understanding of quiet autumn nights and the romance of them.

Billy Cotton and his Band.

The pig got up and slowly walked away and *Home, James* (Regal-Zono. MR1587). Best recording of song billed everywhere as "banned by the B.B.C." Harmless humour to most minds, certainly nothing offensive in this recording and plenty to amuse. *Home, James* appropriate and cheery coupling.

Roy Fox and his Band.

La Majestica and *How am I gonna keep the news from Mother?* (Decca F5402). Roy Fox shows he knows as much about the rumba as anyone. Well worth listening to as well as good for any wild young party. Makes the best of a bad job in the backing.

Blue Moon and *Tiny little finger-prints* (F5401). *Blue Moon* played as rumba which gives variety to jaded reviewer, but not necessarily to average gramophile, but if Trumbauer is not your man Fox may be. Backing another attempt to cash in on success of *Little Man, My Kid's a crooner, His Majesty the Baby* and similar sentiments. **Peggy Dell** does the mother-love stuff well, although one feels she might justifiably smack the brat.

The Casa Loma Orchestra.

The object of my affection and *Where there's smoke there's fire* (Brunswick RL202). Former worth buying, simply for **Pee Wee Hunt's** superb singing. He and Jack Teagarden make any record worth while. If you don't like him, keep away. Backing is as misleading as its title—very little danceability here.

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.

Like a bolt from the blue and *I'm a hundred per cent for you* (Columbia FB1023). Strangely disappointing record. First hearing is exhilarating in parts, second hearing dullness creeps in, third hearing positive disappointment depresses you. Both from Harlem's "Cotton Club Parade" and have a taste of Benny's clarinet. But Benny's second best is better than many others' best.

Ted Lewis and his Band.

Pop! goes your heart and *Happiness Ahead* (Brunswick RL208). Hand it to Ted for his "pop"—listen and you will be intrigued by it and by his all-pervading personality, which is worth a good deal in records of this kind.

Sydney Kyte and his Band.

Procession of the Sirdar and *Samum* (Panachord 25672). *Samum* resurrected again and coupled with semi-classical



Mantovani

character piece from Ippolitov's "Caucasian Sketches." Both good if you like the Eastern flavour.

Mantovani and his Tipica Orchestra.

Hebrew Dances and *Vienna, you've stolen my heart* (Sterno 1565). *Hebrew Dances* best recording by Mantovani yet achieved. Good swing and well recorded. Backing charming waltz.

Eduardo Bianco and his Argentine Orchestra.

Ventimiglia and *Tentadora*, tangos (Brunswick RL201). New tango band and first class. Full of the spirit of the languorous Argentine and the rhythm of Spain—or Mexico.

Fred Stein.

I have a heart for lovely women and *I am playing farewell to you* (Parlophone F121). This and following two more in Parlophone's "Strict Dance Tempo" series. First is waltz, second fox-trot, and both are charming as well as useful.

Gerry Moore.

Why don't you practise what you preach? and *I've got an invitation to a dance* (Parlophone F120). Recorded under the supervision of Victor Sylvester—dancing teacher, so authentic and useful for all dancing teachers. But for you and me? Try it and see.

CROONERS

There is another interesting record by **Pat Hyde** out this month. Once again she has taken a popular song of the moment and worked in an older one, weaving the two into an attractive whole that is different from the ordinary run of crooners' accomplishments. On Parlophone R2040 she sings *Whisper Sweet* with *Day by Day* and *I've got an Invitation to a Dance* and *Dancing and Dreaming*. As usual, **Edgar Jackson and his Orchestra** are in attendance and do their job in a style worthy of the star, who must take care not to overwork that rather coy and arch element in her make-up. She should concentrate more on her immense rhythmic abilities.

Elsie Carlisle is back again on top of her form after a lapse into whininess for some months. On Decca F5436 she sings *Whisper Sweet* and *Dancing with my Shadow*, and on F5380 manages to produce what is a triumph of recording art in *His Majesty the Baby* coupled with *That's why you need me, dear*. I am convinced that *Whisper Sweet* is a good tune, so hear it by one of these clever people who have recorded it.

Connie Boswell, on the other hand, is not nearly so good in *I'm growing fonder of you* and *With every breath I take* (Brunswick 01982) as she can be. Both the numbers are too, too breath-takingly sentimental and Connie wallows. A pity.

Ruth Etting is inclined to wallow too, but after the misfortune of falling in love at first sight she does at least resolve to find her love—to do something active about it and not just sit and sigh. *A Needle in a Haystack* and *I've got an Invitation to a Dance* (Columbia DB1512) represent the search and the disillusionment!

Eve Becke is good in *My Kid's a Crooner* and *Love is in the air again* (Panachord 25652), and better in *His Majesty the Baby*—how they seem to love this—and *If I love again* (Panachord 25670). **Ethel Merman** is one hundred per cent. American pep and punch in *An Earful of Music*—both ears full of it when the record's on the gramophone—and **Lee Wiley** is a pleasing contrast in the quieter *Hands across the Table* (Brunswick 01945).

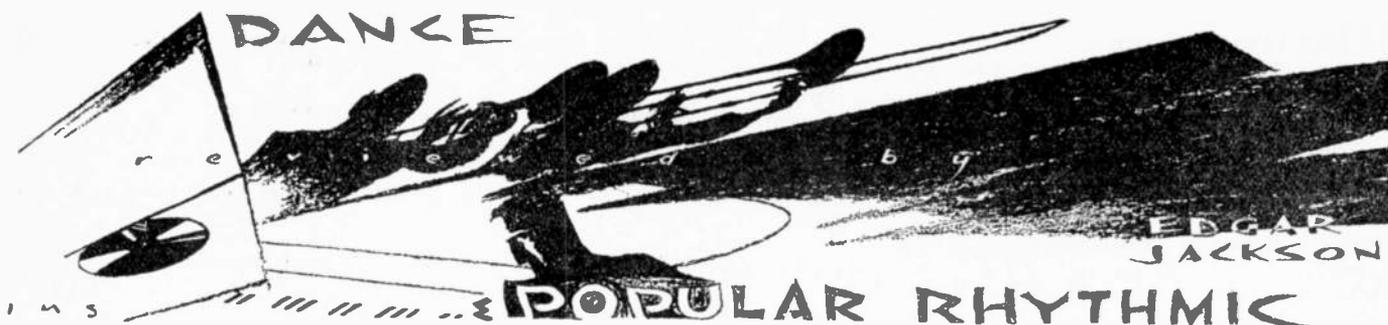
Dick Powell can sing and has recently shown that he can act too, and everyone who sees him in "Happiness Ahead" will want his record of *Pop! goes your heart*—unless, of course, they are fed up with the tune before the end of the picture. It is on Decca F5404 coupled with *Happiness Ahead*, which has at least the merit of being optimistic.

Lanny Ross is another crooner who probably loathes the appellation and insists that he is a singer. He certainly has a voice that is worth listening to and it is a pity that he does not turn his talents to something more worthy than *The Water under the Bridge* and *The World is Mine*, which is described as being "inspired by the picture 'The Count of Monte Cristo'." Brunswick 01977 should go into your collection as an example of a good man gone, if not wrong, at least aghly.

Rex 8399 is the number of the first solo record by **Pat O'Malley**, for some time vocalist with Jack Hylton's Band. The titles chosen are *I only have eyes for you* and *If I love again*. O'Malley should know all there is to know about the art of the microphone, but somehow there is no personality behind these songs; they are pleasantly sung, but that is the sum total of their boast. Rather disappointing.

Kitty Masters and **Val Rosing** join forces on Regal-Zono. MR1601 with *One little kiss* and *June in January*. If only Val Rosing could lose that dreadful tremolo in his voice and if Kitty Masters could sound a little less exasperatingly sweet, both of them might produce interesting records. As it is, they are obviously trying hard to be pleasant and succeed in being little else.

A record of *Too beautiful for words* and *When you're in love* by the late **Russ Colombo** is issued on Decca F5405. An indication of the time it takes for tunes to cross the Atlantic.



Hot Dance Bands

Jack Teagarden—with a swing harp!—on Brunswick

Ambrose finds one from 1915—and introduces his new "Embassy Rhythm Eight"

Phil Napoleon with the Dorseys on H.M.V. :: Louis Armstrong revives two popular hits :: Benny Carter shows how Sax sections should sound

Jack Teagarden and his Orchestra (Am.)

Junk Man (Loesser and Meyer)

Frankie Traumbauer and his Orchestra (Am.)

In a mist ("Bix" Beiderbecke)

(Brunswick 01979—2s. 6d.).

Here's a novelty for you. A real swing harpist, and although the orchestra seems to be quite a large one, he plays such a prominent part in the record that I am not certain that I ought not to have put it with the "Instrumentals."

The gentleman's name is Caspar Reardon. A soloist from the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, he also knows how to be rhythmic and seems to have heard quite a lot about that little matter of style. The whole performance is in keeping with the subdued character of the harp and a very delightful affair it is.

I cannot help feeling sorry that Mr. Teagarden should have been so modest and given us only four bars of trombone solo, but there is a very nice trumpet player and I should hardly faint with amazement to learn that the clarinet is a certain Mr. Goodman.

I am recommending this record as the outstanding feature of the month. It has an original and alluring atmosphere and you will be missing something if you do not hear it.

I am afraid Traumbauer's *In a mist* has missed the mark. This ethereal little morsel which Bix created and recorded as a piano solo (Parlo. R1838, replacing R3504) is not a composition for orchestra; and this particular version, although very polished, is not helped by the way it has been arranged any more than the close-cropped playing, particularly by the brass, has enhanced its rhythmic aspects.

Ambrose and His Orchestra

Embassy Stomp (Barnes)

Hors d'oeuvres (Comer)

(Decca F5375—1s. 6d.).

I wonder how many of you will remember *Hors d'oeuvres*.

I believe it was published early in 1915, when the fox-trot was beginning to be seen at the Tango Teas which were then the craze of West-end society and officers on leave—at any rate, I first remember hearing it when I was a very junior subaltern, at one of the Thé Dansants which Miss Belle Harding, the well-known London teacher of

dancing, used to hold at the premises in Bond Street which are now the Embassy Club. The band consisted of Chappie d'Amato, late of Jack Hylton's band and now with Jack Jackson at the Dorchester, playing banjo, and his aunt and sister (at least, I think that was the relationship) respectively on piano and mandolin.

You will recall that the period was what is now spoken of as the rag-time era, and as rag-time came from America it is perhaps as surprising as it is true that *Hors d'oeuvres* was written by an English composer, Dave Comer.

Dave is now on the executive staff of Feldman's, the music publishers, but at that time he was a member of Murray's Savoy Quartet which used to play at the Savoy Hotel and Murray's Club in Beak Street.

But I am wandering. To return to Ambrose's record, I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the grandest dance records ever made in this country. The augmented brass section, consisting of Max Goldberg and Radcliffe (trumpets), and Lew Davis and Ted Heath (trombones), which Ambrose uses for recording and broadcasting, is glorious, Danny Pola plays brilliant clarinet and alto, Max Bacon shines in clever drum breaks, there are spots for trombone of which Lew Davis makes the most, and one could hardly call Bert Barnes's piano the work of an amateur either. But I think the feature that has really made this record so fascinating is the arrangement by Bert Barnes. His conception of the number is an entertainment in itself.

The ding-dong struggle for supremacy between Ambrose and Lew Stone goes on. There was a time when I felt the latter was getting ahead, but on this record and his recent broadcasts I think we shall have to admit that for the moment the honours are back again with Ambrose.

Embassy Stomp maintains the position of the band as far as performance is concerned, but I am not struck with the composition. One of those fast stomps of which we have had so many from the pens of Archie Bleyer and Gene Gifford, it may be clever in its way, but I doubt if it means much; in fact, I doubt if any of these fast "patterns for dance orchestra" ever mean more than a few moments' excitement when heard for the first time. They are all so superficial.

Embassy Rhythm Eight

Hitchy Koo (Gilbert, Muir and Abraham)

He's a rag-picker (Berlin)

(Decca F5435—1s. 6d.).

After *Hors d'oeuvres* these are, to say the least, disappointing.

I compare them with *Hors d'oeuvres* because the Embassy Rhythm Eight is a contingent from Ambrose's Orchestra. That it has been given a special name is, I gather, partly because only a part of the band is employed—the rhythm section, consisting of Bert Barnes (piano), Joe Branelly (guitar), Max Bacon (drums), and Dick Ball (bass), with Max Goldberg (trumpet), Danny Pola (alto and clarinet), Billy Amstell (tenor) and Lew Davis (trombone)—and partly to draw attention to the fact that it is in every sense a hot combination.

My complaint about the records—at any rate about *He's a rag-picker*—is that what one hears has too little connection with the tunes which the label says is being played. Neither side was scored, both being busked, and possibly this is the cause of much of the trouble, but whether or not it is, the fact remains that only in occasional spots can one realise what the original tune of *He's a rag-picker* was.

That I of all people should complain about lack of melody may seem strange, but this is my point: It is all very well to transcribe or extemporise on an original melody when the transcription or extemporisation provides a better melody, but at the same time one that enables the listener to have running in mind from the harmonics and general mode of procedure the original tune, but when it makes it well-nigh impossible to recognise whereabouts in the original tune one should be, it seems time to give up and get back to what the composer had in mind. There is so little in *He's a rag-picker* that connects with the original tune that even though I am fairly used to relating transcriptions with original melodies, I continually found myself lost in this record. And the substituted melodies are not even good when considered apart from any connection they should have to the original theme. All that the record has to offer is some clever swing busking by the various artists, particularly Lew Davis, whose solo is the exception to my remarks about paucity of melody, and worthy of hot music at its best anywhere.

There is a much closer connection to the original melody in *Hitchy Koo*, but somehow it doesn't seem to have come off, perhaps because *Hitchy Koo* never was a tune worth making a song about. Still the record has its attractions, not the least of which is the string bass duet (!) by Dick Ball and Max Bacon. Dick does the fingering while Max wallops the strings with drum-sticks.

Phil Napoleon's Emperors (Am.)

You can't cheat a cheater (Napoleon, Signorelli and Dorsey)

Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra (Am. N.)

Swingin' Uptown (Parish, Oliver and Lunceford)

(H.M.V. B1120—1s. 6d.).

Although we do not seem to hear much of Phil Napoleon these days, I expect he is familiar to most of you as one of the outstanding trumpets in the good old '26's, '27's and '28's.

The "Emperors" seem to be a swell group. Unless I am very much mistaken these are, in addition to the namesake of the famous Petit Caporal, **Signorelli** at the piano, the late **Eddie Lang**, and both the **Dorseys**. The record is a typical white musicians' busk of its day, with the various artists taking their solos in turn. You will enjoy the neat, tuneful way in which they treat this alluring little melody.

The complete contrast to this slow little offering is found on the other side. *Swingin' Uptown* is one of those fast, vividly coloured concoctions in which enough happens to fill more than half-a-dozen ordinary records.

With more bands than I like to think of such material would have been the signal to lose out, and the result would have been a complete debacle. Not so with Mr. Lunceford's. He seems to have managed to maintain discipline in spite of all, and I suppose of the type of thing this is, on the general efficiency of the ensemble alone, one of the best records one could find.

Among the parts I especially enjoyed was the sax solo. Only an artist could have thought out those last two bars and then put them over as they are put over here. And they are not the only ones worth hearing in the solo. Equally the sax solo is not the only one worth hearing in the record. There is a very nice spot of trumpet in the second chorus.

All the while I have been writing this I have been trying to remember the real name of *Swingin' Uptown*. The melody is so familiar that I am sure it is an old tune dished up again, but for the life of me I can't think of the title. Will someone be kind enough to put me out of my misery?

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra (Am. N.)

Exactly like you (Flelds and McHugh) (v by **Louis Armstrong**)

Home (Van Steeden and Clarkson) (v by **Louis Armstrong**)

(Parlophone R2042—2s. 6d.).

Exactly like you was recorded at the same session as Armstrong's *Dinah* (Parlo. R1159) and *Tiger Rag* (R942), and *Home* at the same session as *Between the Devil and the deep blue sea* and *Kickin' the gong around* (both R1170) and *All of me* (R1894).

Neither of these sessions can be said to have been among Armstrong's best, but this was mainly because of some rather weak links in the supporting orchestras, and if you like the rather theatrical style that Armstrong had begun to adopt about this time you will have no cause to complain at Parlophone's decision to revive two popular hits by releasing Louis' recordings.

Satch'mo' certainly carries the flag in *Home*. His trumpet may be flamboyant, but there is no denying the command he has of the instrument, and he sings as only Louis can.

(By the way, Louis, why not have gone the whole hog and got Rudy Weidoft to play sax for you?)

Exactly like you suffers from a not too good arrangement as well as an orchestra that is even weaker than that used in *Home*, and perhaps because of this Louis never seems to get going to quite the same extent. Still, it is Louis, and whatever troughs and peaks one might have to put into a graph of his musical career, he has always been—and still is!—the greatest of them all.

* * *

Benny Carter and His Orchestra (Am. N.)

Shoot the works (Carter)

Everybody Shuffle (Carter)

(Bruno. 01981—2s. 6d.).

You can trust Benny Carter to have a nice band and you can trust Benny Carter to write acceptable numbers and see that they are well scored, and as you can trust these three things to result in a good record you have the answer to these two all laid out plainly before you.

I am really sorry that so many good artists seem to think it fashionable nowadays to retire into the comparative obscurity of their ensembles just because they are leaders. We found it in Jack Teagarden's *Junk Man*, and now here is this Benny developing the same complex. When he played with other people's bands we used to hear quite a lot from him. In these records his only solo is a few bars in *Everybody Shuffle*. However, there is any amount of sax teamwork in both sides, and when Benny leads the reeds they really become a section. But as I say, when it comes to solos Benny just retires gracefully, leaving the work to an excellent tenor, a grand trumpet, and in *Everybody Shuffle* a spot of immaculate piano by—yes, it must be **Theodore Wilson**.

* * *

Ramblers Dance Orchestra (Dutch)

Ohio Serenade (de Kers)

Dancing Dogs (Hudson)

(Decca F5407—1s. 6d.).

For a long time Holland has been recognised as a country where they like swing music, and when you like anything it is usually not very long before you get to know a good deal about it. Nevertheless it is a surprise to find not so much perhaps

that the Casino Hamdorff in Laren, where the Ramblers play, has such a good band, but that the band has found the opportunity to get so good at the ultra hot music it has recorded on this disc.

It certainly makes no bones about things. It wades right in and tackles difficult arrangements with a confidence that achieves its own end, and if it has to be said that its playing is conspicuous more for verve than soul, that doesn't alter the fact that some of the soloists are really brilliant, a remark one may justly apply to the first trumpet. Here we have a player who has not only a technique second to none, but who, instead of slavishly copying others, has managed to develop something of a style of his own.

Dancing Dogs is the better side if only because it is the better number. *Ohio Serenade* has the germs of a good composition at the start but later degenerates into a collection of hot clichés which end up by getting nowhere.

* * *

Claude Hopkins and His Orchestra (Am. N.)

Monkey Business (Norman and Hopkins)

Maudy (Berlin) (v by **Orlando Roberson**)

(Bruno. 01976—2s. 6d.).

I doubt if *Maudy* could ever be the kind of thing out of which great swing music is made, but I like the record. Of its popular type the tune is pleasant, and I like the way the arranger has dealt with it. He has treated it in the way that is fashionable in swing music at the moment, but—and this is where he scores over so many others—everything he has done sounds natural. Nothing makes you feel it has been put in because someone else did the same thing in another tune. The vocal refrain might have been dispensed with (or they might have had another singer) and the trombone solo is just another of those flowery bits, but otherwise the stuff is good and the record develops nicely to a good climax with some very fascinating growls from the brass by way of a fitting finale.

Monkey Business is just more "material for hot dance bands" played with a great deal more style and competence than it seems to deserve. Who said *Five Stomp*?

Instrumental

More Solos by "Hawk" :: Nat Gonella with some new Georgians :: First records of Valaida :: Art Tatum and that Mess of Pottage.

Coleman Hawkins (saxophone) (N.) with

Stanley Black (piano)

Honeysuckle Rose (T. Waller)

Lost in a fog (J. McHugh)

(Parlophone R2041—2s. 6d.).

These are the last two of the four sides recorded by the one and only in London, just before he recently departed to the Continent.

Hawk is gorgeous, particularly in the slightly faster *Honeysuckle Rose*. Once again one may marvel at his perfect tone and execution, but it is his phrases and the way he interprets them that have got me going. The first chorus is (for Hawkins) comparatively straight, but there is hardly a bar in the second that does not show him to be one of the most creative artists in this game of jazz, and not the least attractive are the two in which he changes key to lead into it.

I am not quite so happy about the accompaniments. After hearing *Lady be good* and *Lullaby*, I cannot help feeling that nothing has been gained by omitting the little orchestra, completed with such conspicuous success by Albert Harris and "Tiny" Winters. I pointed out at the time the session was arranged that Hawkins' efforts with "Buck" had proved that piano by itself was hardly robust enough to carry the weight of an instrument like the tenor saxophone—particularly when played in the rich, voluptuous way that Hawk plays it—but the powers that be thought it would be a good plan to try two titles with piano only. So piano it was, and piano having been decided upon I feel that no one could have put up a better show than Stanley Black has. His solo in the faster *Honeysuckle Rose* is a little gem of construction and performance.

Nat Gonella (trumpet solos) and His Georgians

I'm gonna wash my hands of you (Vienna and Pola) (v by Nat Gonella)

Georgia's Gorgeous Girl (Parish, Cavanaugh and Perkins) (v by Nat Gonella) (Parlophone F116—1s. 6d.).

Basin Street Blues (S. Williams) (v by Nat Gonella)

E flat blues (Morris and C. Williams) (v by Nat Gonella) (Parlophone F117—1s. 6d.).

You may not have to play quietly to make good jazz, but it helps. I apologise for twisting a good old 'un, but it meets the case so well. Some people still think swing means swagger and noise. These records show that nothing is lost in the way of swing by playing neatly and quietly; further, it enables one to enjoy the good things that these Georgians do without being driven into the next street.

I particularly liked the two slower titles on F117, and even if there is rather too much singing and too little trumpet in *E flat blues* it is the better of the two. Nat is playing delightfully these days. That his phrases all sound so natural and easy will not conceal from those who understand that he has an imagination of his own which never seems stumped for an idea. Also, he has a sense of humour—and that goes for his singing too.

Nat has altered the personnel of the Georgians since last time. On these records his brother, **Bruts Gonella**, plays second trumpet (note nice work behind the vocals); **Ernest Ritte** and **Don Barrigo** are the alto and tenor saxes respectively; **Monia Litter** is the pianist, **Bob Dryden** the drummer, and the bass player is **Tiny Winters**, the one with the most swing of them all.

Valaida (N.) with Billy Mason and His Orchestra

I can't dance (Williams and Gains) (v by Valaida)

I wish I were twins (de Lange, Loesser and Meyer) (v by Valaida) (Parlophone F118—1s. 6d.).

(Reviewed by L.F.)

Valaida, coloured star of the all-coloured revue "Blackbirds of 1935" at the London Coliseum, makes her English recording debut as a trumpet soloist and singer in the above.

Oddly enough she sounds even better on the wax than she does over the footlights.

She is yet another disciple of the great Louis. Her phrases are simple, but she has a strong personality and there is a swing in her playing. Perhaps these are her greatest assets, for although she undoubtedly has technique, it is not always quite up to all she attempts. I am afraid she must plead guilty to more than one cracked note, and an unsuccessful attempt to reach a high one for the last chord of *I wish I were twins* can hardly be said to have added to the effectiveness of its ending. Still, in spite of these minor blemishes the charming Valaida is a trumpet player to be reckoned with, just as she is a singer who should very soon become a real attraction on records.

The accompanying orchestra has a more than passable swing. **George Elrick**, the drummer, opens both records with a solo vamp that at once establishes the tempo (a good stunt this), and there are **Buddy Featherstonehaugh** with some acceptable tenor playing and a second trumpet in the

person of a young Scots boy named **Duncan White** of whom we should hear a great deal more as soon as the profession realises his capabilities.

Ants is the better side chiefly because *Twins* ends very coarsely and suggests a rather lamentable lack of rehearsal.

Note for the curious: (1) "Nyas" at the end of the second vocal of *Twins* is Mr. Berry of the "Blackbirds" show. (2) "Tea" in the reverse is *not* the kind you drink.

Brian Lawrence and the Quagline Quartette

Shine (Brown and Dabney) (v by Brian Lawrence)

Dinah (Lewis Young and Akst) (v by Brian Lawrence) (Panachord 25685—1s. 6d.).

The little Quagline Quartette is still going strong. One or two phrases by the accordion are perhaps not hot music at its best, and I have heard Jim Easton play better clarinet, but his baritone sax is good, and honours to the guitar, bass, and Brian Lawrence for singing that is pleasant and rhythmical. I still think this is the best small band to dance to in town.

Art Tatum (piano solo) (Am. N.)

I ain't got nobody (S. Williams)

When a woman loves a man (Mercer, Jenkins and Harrighan) (Brunswick 01978—2s. 6d.).

There comes a time in the lives of many of us when we begin to wonder whether ideals are worth fighting for any longer, and whether it would not be easier to sacrifice our beliefs and succumb to the clamour of the crowd.

I think Mr. Tatum must have reached this stage when he made these records. Not that his piano-playing is without the merit of a high degree of executive competence—but with its frills and fripperies what does it all amount to? Perhaps a lot judged by drawing-room standards, where gushing hostesses and flatterers as unenlightened as they are insincere abound; but nothing, I am afraid, in our little world, where swing and style mean so much and pretty little decorations no more than the trivialities they are.

It looks to me, Mr. Tatum, as though you are selling your soul for a mess of pottage. Take a trip back to Harlem to your own folk. Their music means much more, particularly when played as you can play it (when you want to).

Also, what about some new phrase? Most of those in these records which you haven't played in previous ones Earl Hines played for you—and years ago.

Vocal

"Fats" Waller, on H.M.V., in a new mood.

"Fats" Waller and His Rhythm (Am. N.) *Dream Man* (Young and Ager) (v by "Fats" Waller)

I'm growing fonder of you (Young, Meyer and Wendling) (v by "Fats" Waller) (H.M.V. B)117—1s. 6d.).

Fats has tried it all ways round, and whatever there may be to be said for or against his latest mode of procedure, it is certainly bringing him the money. In addition to his various other activities he

now has a regular commercial radio hour in America and his recordings at the moment seem to be outnumbering those of the other Victor artistes by about six to one. The hot fans' idol has now definitely become a hit with the American public.

These H.M.V. releases are Fats in his most commercial mood, the sort of thing you hear him doing over the air if you are lucky enough to be able to get America when he happens to be on.

But in saying this, I am not suggesting that there is nothing in them to appeal to you and me. There is something very infectious about the inconsequent, good-humoured way Fats seems to be taking life just now, and although no one could accuse him of treating these popular songs with undue seriousness, his piano-playing is worth listening to, his singing is good fun, and there are some unexpectedly good soloists in the little orchestra that is responsible for "and his Rhythm" part of the proceedings.

I cannot help feeling that H.M.V. could, if they went the right way to work, make Fats into a big public attraction over here, particularly with that large section which revels in our Harry Roy. Fats has the same flair for always seeing the brighter side of life, and good as these records are of their kind, H.M.V. have others which are even better (may we please have *Believe it, beloved*, Mr. Streeton?). If they started putting them out in bigger quantities and more frequently the supply would create the demand by giving more opportunities for people to realise what an amusing and versatile entertainer Mr. "Fats" Waller can be.

The Boswell Sisters (Am.)

It's written all over your face (Schwartz and Adam)

The object of my affection (Tomlin, Poe and Grier) (Brunswick 01961—2s. 6d.).

More of the Boswells well up to their usual standard. I expect you have heard *The object of my affection* over the air, so if I say that the Bossies take it at an easy comfortable tempo without getting unduly excited, you can probably guess the rest.

The other side is a new sentimental melody number which may well become a popular hit. Connie Boswell's tears of anguish take up most of the first chorus and the girls harmonise elegantly for the rest.

The usual very polished accompaniments are again a feature.

The Four Aces

Hot Dogs and Sasparella (Whitcup and Samuels)

Corinne Corinna (Williams and Chatman) (Decca F5437—1s. 6d.).

The Four Aces have just joined Jack Payne's Band and I congratulate Jack on his acquisition. It is only a few months ago since these four boys decided to get together to try and do a Mills Brothers act, and then only as amateurs. But they got on so well that they soon realised there was money to be made, and to-day they are already a front-line attraction. They say comparisons are odious, but I'm not so sure that they are in this case. The Aces may still have a way to go before they become as good as the Mills Brothers, but they are already easily the next best thing.

EDGAR JACKSON.

THE PARLOPHONE MUSIC OF ALL NATIONS SERIES

by RODNEY GALLOP

THE science of folk-music owes a great debt of gratitude to the gramophone. Not only do scientific expeditions and individual collectors arm themselves with recording apparatus and thus make permanent record of the words and music of folk-musicians the world over, with all their vocal and instrumental mannerisms, but the big recording companies, while pursuing purely commercial aims, have made similar records forming a valuable contribution to musical scholarship.

Perhaps inevitably, however, such records are difficult of access alike to the specialist and the ordinary amateur with a bent for folk music. Many of them are manufactured in the country of issue, and there is no opportunity for the prospective purchaser to hear them. They must be ordered blindly from the catalogue, like a pig in a poke, and even then are only obtainable after long delay, and at prices enhanced by a substantial import duty.

These two disadvantages do not hold for the many foreign records which are pressed in England for export, but here again the difficulty of choice recurs. Which of us feels capable of making an intelligent selection when faced with a catalogue printed, say, in Finnish or Arabic? If we choose at random we may light on something raucous, monotonous, unintelligible, or even, sublime anticlimax, the equivalent in the local vernacular of the latest fox-trot.

What we need is some knowledgeable person to tell us what is likely to prove most characteristic and picturesque, yet withal acceptable to Western ears, and to draw our attention to the real "naps" which many of these catalogues contain. Accordingly, many of us were delighted when Parlophone announced a "Music of All Nations" series, to comprise selections from the catalogues of related companies in seventeen different countries, thus making easily accessible to British buyers records which could otherwise only have been obtained with much trouble and expense.

Altogether, eight records have been issued in the series and it is well over a year since the last of these appeared, and although this should not be taken as grounds for concluding that the series is completed, it seems to be justification for reviewing its results to date.

Rheinlaender: Potpourri. Blas Orchester mit Gesang. (R1153.)

The first record issued contained nothing very exotic or alarming. It is a potpourri of Rheinlaender, performed by an old friend of pre-war days, the German Band, with the interpolation of a number of vocal refrains.

The Rheinlaender is an old-fashioned German dance, in the manner of the polka. Its gay lilting tunes, in polka time, have the obvious, tonic-dominant, tuneful quality that one associates with the beer-garden or merry-go-round.

The music is of course "popular" rather than "folk" in nature, as the inclusion of Johann Strauss's "Pfeif Rheinlaender" testifies, but it is no less truly national for that.

Each side contains five tunes, brightly sung and played with amusing effects.

(a) War Song; (b) Funeral Song (with tom-tom). Sun Dance (with instrumental accompaniment). Sung by Chief Os-Ko-Mon. (R1158.)

Very different from the last is the Red Indian music on the second record of the series.

Chief Os-Ko-Mon is, if I mistake not, the same person as Chief Os-ke-non-ton (a syllable or two seems to make little difference in these Redskin names) who made a notable pre-

electric record for H.M.V. (B2083). He has a fine voice, and might almost be called the Redskin Paul Robeson.

On the old H.M.V. record his two songs, "Invocation to the Sun God" and "Peyote Drinking Song," were rather spoiled by a meretricious piano accompaniment, but no such charge can be levelled against the first side of the Parlophone record.

The "War Song" contains several excellent examples of the "die-away" characteristic of Red Indian music, a *portando* descent from a high note to one far lower in the scale. The "Funeral Song" with its tom-tom accompaniment is both beautiful and impressive. In a curious way it recalls some of the Hebridean songs. So far as the singer's performance is concerned, the other side of the record is equally good, but personally I have no use for the "colourful" orchestral accompaniment.

Gender Wajang Seléndero (Music for a Shadow Play). Djanger Putih Putih Saput Anduk (Sitting Dance). (R1182.)

The musical heritage of Java, derived originally from the Hindu and Islamic cultures which reached the island (the former in the fourth and the latter in the fifteenth centuries), has been much affected by later influences from Eastern Asia and Holland. Not so the adjacent island of Bali, which has preserved pure and uncontaminated the earlier characteristics, instruments and art-forms of this music, so astonishing with its elaborate shading of volume, tempo and instrumental colour.

The first side, containing music from the Balinese shadow-play ("Wajang Parwa"), illustrating Lower Indian myths, takes its name from the Javanese Slendro tone-system in which the octave is divided into five equal intervals. It is played on two pairs of metallophones (relatives of the xylophone) tuned in octaves, the resonance plates of which hang loosely over bamboo resonators (Gender). The effect is curiously remote and fairy-like, evocative of distant gongs or temple bells.

Structurally, the movement consists of a rhapsodic opening, repeated at the close, with a quicker middle section in which the leading melody appears in the bass as *canto firmo*. The intensity of tone is often raised by quart parallels.

The second side is totally different in character. The Djanger or Sitting Dance, which many will remember having seen in Paris, was first devised in 1925. The dancers sit in rows round a rectangle, the men and women each occupying two opposing sides. The leader, in the middle, works them up with wild hypnotic glances as they move their heads and shoulders convulsively to and fro. A monotonous theme for drum and *rebab* (Arabian pin-fiddle) opens the record, into which breaks a spoken chorus of men, in syncopated rhythm. The women join in with a new theme, and the music works up towards a thrilling climax, which, owing to the premature interruption of the record, is never reached.

Jotas de Picadillo: "Las Mujeres són muy malas": Felisa Galé and José Oto, with rondalla accompaniment. "Juan Simón": Angelillo, with guitar accompaniment by M. Borrull. (R1212.)

To present a representative selection of Spanish music on two sides of a ten-inch record is an impossible task, for there is probably a wider range of musical style in Spain than in any other European country. On the whole, however, one cannot quarrel with the choice of an Aragonese *jota* and a *flamenco* song from Andalusia. Both reflect the exotic influences which

most admirers of Spanish music expect for their money, and yet exhibit very marked differences, the one being from the extreme north and the other from the extreme south of the country.

The *jota*, of course, is the characteristic "song and dance turn" of Aragon. The dance, performed by couples facing each other, with much clicking of thumbs or castanets, is of the *fandango* type, common in almost every part of the Peninsula. The music, in 3-4 time, consists of a stereotyped introduction, played by a *rondalla* or band of guitars of different shapes and sizes, ending on an unresolved chord of the dominant seventh; and of a *copla* or vocal refrain, likewise in the diatonic major, which conforms rigidly to a traditional rhythmic mould with cadences in the ornate flourishes of which oriental influence may be discerned.

The four-line verse of each *copla* is often improvised on the spur of the moment, and competitions are held in which singers engage in melodious debates, each seeking to score off the other. Such verses are usually satirical in theme, and are known as *jotas de picadillo* . When, as in the present case, a man and a woman are opposed to each other, the effect can be most entertaining. José Oto begins:

Women are a bad lot,
For even they admit it,
And we poor men
Are a lot of little angels,

to which Felisa Galé retorts:

If men are little angels
And women are a bad lot,
Why do you chase after us,
You troop of silly donkeys?

The leaflet supplied with this record is singularly infelicitous in its numerous inaccuracies.

To begin with, it resurrects the legend, long since discredited, that the *jota* owes its origin to a mythical twelfth century Moor called Aben Jot. It goes on to quote *Juan Simón* as a characteristic example of *cante hondo* (which it is not) and of *cante flamenco* , of which it is about as bad an example as could well have been found. I will not repeat here all I have written in these columns on this particular subject, but it is worth recalling that the Andalusian music reflects Byzantine, Moorish and gypsy influences, and that the true *cante hondo* is only to be heard in *Soleares* and *Siguiriyas Gitanas* , while the *flamenco* category includes other dance measures such as the *Malagueña* , *Petenera* , etc. *Juan Simón* is not a dance measure, nor is it in the characteristic Andalusian scale with the Phrygian cadence. It can only claim to be *flamenco* , and a degenerate example at that, by reason of the mannerisms of the singer and his characteristic toneless voice, which led Terpander, in spite of the hint which the other side of the record should have given him, to conclude that Angelillo (Little Angel) was a woman. It is a tragedy that a recording of *La Niña de los Peines* was not substituted for this altogether lamentable performance.

A Hill-Billy Party. "Jennie's Strawberry Feast." (R1218.)

I must confess myself equally disappointed with this record, the inclusion of which was presumably dictated by the recent vogue for hill-billies. Not that this type of song has not individual and very enjoyable qualities of its own. But the examples given here are few and uninteresting, and there is a great deal too much padding in the form of Jennie's not very amusing patter.

Kuentler Marsch (Johann Schrammel): Vindobona Schrammel Quartet. Ich Muss Wieder Einmal in Grinzing Sein (Ralph Benatzky) Frank Hoffman with Schrammel Quartet. (R1279.)

This record has a good deal in common with the German one which formed the first of the series. The Austrian *Schrammelmusik* takes its name from the brothers Schrammel, who lived in the second half of the nineteenth century and turned out vast quantities of light popular music. The

"Kuentler Marsch" (Artists' March), a blatant affair, is actually by Johann, the elder brother, and is played on the characteristic combination of fiddles, guitar (or zither) and accordeon. On the other side is a more modern example of the type, sung to the accompaniment of a Schrammel Quartet, which extols the delights of the *Heuriger* in Grinzing on the outskirts of the city. It must be explained that the *Heuriger* is the new wine (*Heurige* : this year's) which the vineyard-owner sells direct to the public. A Schrammel Quartet and singer are often in attendance, and the countryside resounds with their lively strains. The words of the song are difficult to catch without an intimate knowledge of the broad Viennese dialect, but a rough translation of them is as follows:

"Children, listen to me. Since it's Sunday to-day (and perhaps we'll make Monday a holiday too) come along and let's all go for a spree. Pepi, dear, wear your spotted dress; Mitzi, dear, don't dawdle so; Schani, bring me my silver-knobbed stick; Alte, wear your new petticoat, so everyone will see what fine folk we are and how ready for fun!

I want to be in Grinzing once again,
Drinking wine, drinking wine;
It's just like a peep into Heaven,
Drinking wine, drinking wine,
The Good Lord most certainly did a good job
When He made after six days' work a holiday,
And we ought all to be thankful to Him,
Drinking wine, drinking wine."

Naga-uta: "Urashima." Ha-uta: "Umenimo Haru." (R1310.)

Japan took the fundamental characteristics of her music from China and Corea in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, but, as so often happens, in assimilating these extraneous influences, she has left her mark upon them, softening the firm lines of the music from the mainland. The melodic basis of Chinese music is pentatonic, but by the introduction of a half-tone step leading downwards to the main tones, the Japanese have completely altered its character.

As a general rule it may be said that Japanese music is in common time with alternations of free recitative, and that the singing voice, as this record well shows, moves in unison with the accompaniment, but either slightly anticipates or follows the instrumental note, thus producing a strange effect of alternating concord and discord.

The first side contains an example of *Naga-uta* , the "long song," a dramatic art-song created in about 1700 to illustrate a danced pantomime. A free recitative, unaccompanied at first, varies with the basic rhythmic parts, and it is characteristic of the Japanese style that the voice slides away from the final note. The peculiar style of delivery is derived from the traditional *No* plays, and the annotator of the new Parlophone Album of Oriental Music states significantly that "the Japanese has to learn to master this style, and the European to enjoy it." Perhaps this is what Terpander meant when he wrote that this record would be useful chiefly as a joke to amuse your friends after dinner!

On the other side is an example of the rather more intelligible *Ha-uta* , the "short song," the most popular form of Japanese art-song. It is accompanied by two *Shamisen* (guitars) and a *Shakuhachi* (long-flute), which in the middle of the record introduces a suggestion of distant temple-music.

The words of the song are worth quoting, for, whatever may be thought of the music, there is no questioning their immediate appeal:

"It is New Year's morn. Spring already touches the plum tree.

Water rushes from the spring and people sing in the streets. The morning sun silhouettes the shadows of passers-by on my window,

From the distance the sound of flutes reaches my ear.

'Is he coming?' I ask of the oracle.

'At last you have come, dearest. Take the tea that I have prepared for you.'

Technical Talk

TUNING PICK-UPS—II

by P. WILSON

ALTHOUGH from this point on these notes are mainly concerned with the Meltrope pick-up, the principles involved, with two or three exceptions which I shall specify, apply equally well to most other types of moving-iron pick-up.

Look first of all at Fig. 1, which shows the pole-pieces and armature, the polarity being distinguished by the letters N, N', S, S'. For clearness at this point the pivoting and damping arrangements and the pick-up coil, which fills the space between the pole-pieces, have been omitted.

As the armature is moved by the stylus with the fish-tail going over to the left, the magnetic flux from N through the armature to S' is greater than that from N' up the armature to S, and so there is a net downward flux through the armature. The opposite result occurs when the fish-tail is moved towards S. In both cases, however, the upper pole tends to pull the armature farther over, and in the absence of any restoring force the armature would freeze to one or other of the upper poles.

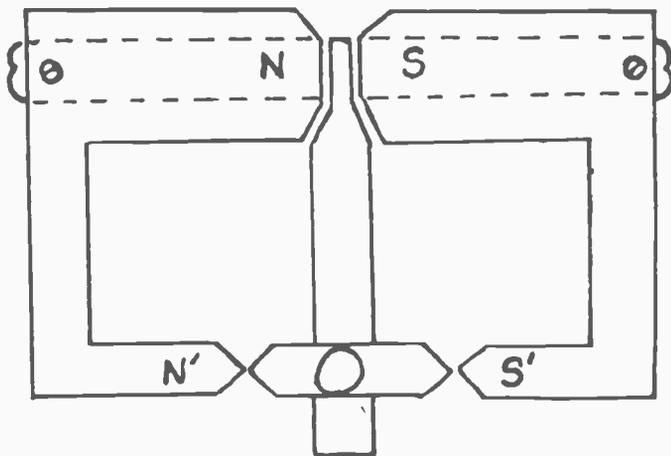


Fig. 1. Pole-pieces and armature assembly of the Meltrope Pick-up.

Usually the restoring force is provided by the spring control at the pivots and in the fish-tail damping. In the Meltrope two additional magnetic restoring forces are provided. First of all note the shape of the magnetic gaps at the lower poles. They are such that when the armature is displaced these gaps *both* open. Since magnetic force always acts in such a way as to make the air gaps a minimum, the displacement of the armature sets up a restoring force at the lower poles.

The second magnetic restoring force comes from the use of magnetic balls in the damping arrangements at the fish-tail. I will deal with this later.

The points to notice at the moment are that to get the best results :

- (1) The air gaps on each side of the fish-tail should be exactly equal when the armature is in its mid-position ;
- (2) The air gaps at the lower poles should likewise be exactly equal ; and
- (3) (in the Meltrope) the wedge-shaped projections on the armature should be mounted exactly in line with the corresponding wedges on the two pole-pieces.

Equality in the sizes of the gaps can be accurately judged by eye. If necessary a fine needle file should be used on the armature and/or the pole-pieces to obtain equality. But remember to remove the magnet (and keeper it with a piece

of soft iron) before wielding the file. Otherwise, to remove the filings may be troublesome later on.

One additional precaution in the case of the Meltrope should be mentioned. The lower air gaps should be not less than $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch across, to the eye. The temptation is to have very small gaps in order to increase efficiency. There are two dangers in this. In the first place, owing to the wedge-shaped formation, a gap which seems to give a clearance before the armature is pressed down when the pivoting device is screwed up may in fact disappear altogether as soon as the wedges get into line. In the second place, if the gaps are very small it only requires a slight give in the rubber sleeving of the pivots to cause one of them to close up and thereafter the armature will rub against the bottom pole-pieces, causing a most objectionable distortion in reproduction. The expansion of the rubber when the pick-up is warmed may restore the *status quo* for a while, but the trouble will recur.

It is probably true to say that careful adjustment of pivoting arrangements will effect a greater improvement in all moving-iron pick-ups than any other single thing.

The tightness of the spring control is important here, too. In the Meltrope, owing to the magnetic restoring forces, the mechanical spring can be much less stiff than in other types. Remember, too, that if the magnetic gaps are very small a stronger spring is needed. It is well worth while to sacrifice the larger output obtained by the use of smaller gaps to gain a more satisfactory pivot control.

Now a word or two about the real damping arrangements. Usually these take the form of a pad of rubber operating on a slight extension of the fish-tail above the upper pole-pieces. If the spring control at the pivots is adequate improvement in the way of smoothness of response can nearly always be effected by substituting for the rubber a material of greater energy-absorbing property such as Art Gum or, best of all, soft Viscoloid.

In the Meltrope, the Collaro, and one or two others the damping material is disposed in recesses in the upper poles. Usually these recesses are much too small to accommodate enough damping material. In the Meltrope a tubular cavity is cut right through each of the upper pole-pieces, closed at the ends remote from the fish-tail by screws (which, by the way, are locked by small grub screws on the faces of the pole-pieces), which can be used to adjust the damping pressure.



Fig. 2. Details of the Meltrope damping arrangements.

The damping arrangements are also novel, as may be seen from Fig. 2. They are identical on each side of the fish-tail. Next to the fish-tail is a tiny washer, about $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch thick with a $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch hole, made from special rubber sheet ; then comes an iron ball, coppered to prevent rusting ; then there is a cylinder of Art Gum $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch long ; then another ball ; then two more cylinders of Art Gum, and finally the screw with a little rubber tubing attached to it. The diameter of all these elements is such as to give a clearance inside the bore of the pole-piece.

This damping arrangement has three different functions. First, as the armature is moved towards one pole-piece the iron balls on that side are attracted towards it more than those in the other pole-piece and thus exert a restoring force on the armature. This is the second magnetic restoring force

referred to above. Secondly, part of the flux between the pole-piece and the armature is passed on through the iron ball, and since the washer next to the fish-tail is thin and has a small central hole, the gap between the ball and the fish-tail is quite tiny. If the washer is made of the right sort of springy material the response due to the passage of this part of the magnetic flux may be made to have a characteristic rising with frequency. This is especially useful since the response due to the passage of flux direct from the pole-piece to the fish-tail has a characteristic falling as the frequency increases. Theoretically, I suppose, it should be possible to obtain any desired balance between the two, but in practice I have not yet found any material for the front washer stable enough to give the required rise, without risk. I can get a combined

response rising from 1,000 to 5,000 cycles by making the hole in the washer rather larger, but after a short time the ball begins to penetrate through the hole and to give a magnetic short circuit. Normally a slightly falling response is aimed at.

The third feature about the damping is that the mass reactance of the balls is opposite in sign to the spring reactance in the Art Gum and the two thus tend to cancel out, leaving a substantially resistive characteristic over a wide range of frequency, which, of course, is what is really wanted.

It will be appreciated, therefore, that the sizes of the various elements have been chosen after a lot of laborious experiment and should not be modified without caution.

The details of adjustment I must reserve for a further article.

TECHNICAL REPORTS

The Marconiphone Superhet Receiver Model 264

Price 12½ guineas

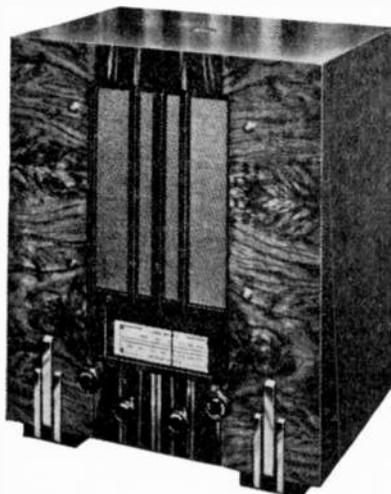
Specification.

Frequency Changer :—Marconi MX40 Valve.
I.F. Amplifier :—Marconi VMS4 Valve.
Second Detector and L.F. :—Marconi MHD4 Valve.
Power Stage :—Marconi MPT4 Valve.
Rectifier :—Marconi MU12 Valve.
L.F. Coupling :—R.C.C. Transformer.
Loudspeaker :—Electro-Magnet M.C.
Speaker Coupling :—Transformer.
Power Output :—2 Watts (approx.).
Voltage Range :—200–250 A.C., 50–100 Cycles.
Wave Range :—200–550 and 1,000–2,000 Metres.
Consumption :—60 Watts (approx.).
Q.A.V.C., Silent Tuning and Anti-Static Controls, Tone Control, Mains Aerial, and Provision for Pick-up and Auxiliary Speaker.

This is the first of the new Marconiphone "Jubilee" range of instruments to come our way, and a handsome model it is too.

A perusal of the specification above will give some idea as to the flexibility and capabilities of the circuit, but it does not tell the whole story. One has to manipulate the receiver to know just how effective the A.V.C. and anti-static silent tuning circuits are, how the former holds programmes at uniform strength irrespective of the signal input, and how static and other parasitic background noises are considerably reduced by adjusting the static control on the chassis with the silent tuner knob in the appropriate position.

Of its type this receiver is perhaps the most selective and sensitive of any Marconiphone hitherto. The mains aerial alone, without any earth connection, provides signal strength enough to enable a goodly selection of foreigners to be received as well as the London and Midland Regionals and the National programmes, so that for those who are content with few



The Marconiphone Jubilee Receiver

alternative programmes the set has all the virtues of a transportable.

Hum is not discernible three feet from the receiver.

At normal listening strength there is very little evidence of discoloration by cabinet resonance and the balance between bass and treble—with the tone control set three-quarters of the way towards maximum high-note response—is satisfactory. An increase in volume, however, calls for a corresponding increase in high notes to counteract the augmentation of bass by sympathetic cabinet vibrations.

This feature of the receiver's extended high-note characteristic is useful for enlivening some dull transmissions.

There are four controls to the receiver: tuner, tone, the combined volume control and silent tuning switch, and a fourth knob controlling the functions of wave-change, radio-to-gramophone and mains switching.

The cabinet design and finish surpasses, in our opinion, the best of previous Marconiphone models.

The H.M.V. Superhet Radiogram Model 541

Price 22 guineas

Specification.

Frequency Changer :—Marconi MX40 Valve.
I.F. Amplifier :—Marconi VMS4 Valve.
Second Detector and L.F. :—Marconi MHD4 Valve.
Power Stage :—Marconi MPT4 Valve.
Power Output :—2 Watts (approx.).
Rectifier :—Marconi MU12 Valve.
L.F. Coupling :—R.C.C. Transformer.
Loudspeaker :—Electro-Magnet M.C.
Speaker Coupling :—Transformer.
Wave Length Range :—200–550 and 1,000–2,000 Metres.
Voltage Range :—200–250 A.C., 50–100 Cycles.
Total Consumption :—100 Watts (approx.).
Tone Control, Silent Tuning Anti-Static Controls, Q.A.V.C., Mains Aerial, and Provision for Auxiliary Speaker.

Here is the radio-gramophone counterpart of the new H.M.V. Console receiver (Model 444) which was reviewed last month.

So far as the radio side is concerned, the general efficiency is much the same. It is well able to receive the more important Continental transmissions with only the mains aerial in circuit, and naturally with an outdoor aerial both input and range are increased to such an extent that one is really thankful for such amenities as the silent tuning, static suppressor, and particularly for the efficient automatic volume-control circuit, which is not only useful in counteracting fading but also in preventing overloading of the L.F. amplifier when passing through the local station tuning point.

On both radio and gramophone there is less tendency for the music to be coloured by cabinet resonance when reproducing at large volume levels; this in all probability would escape notice unless one hears the 444 and the radiogram side by side,

RELIABILITY

is every bit as important as good tone

YOU may remember Argus, who always saw everything because never more than two of his hundred eyes slept at one time.

Well, we've a section at the factory rather like him which goes by the dull name of "Service Records." The "eyes" of this particular section are the Murphy dealers (and there are about 800 of them). Its job is to discover, collect and analyse any faults that may occur in Murphy sets and radiogramophones after they are sold. Anything that goes wrong, however insignificant (a knob working loose or an aerial plug coming out of its socket), is immediately reported by the Murphy dealer to "Service Records" section.

So you can see that, as far as is humanly possible, we have our finger on the pulse of every set and radiogramophone sold. If faults which haven't shown themselves under test or during manufacture start to appear at a later date, then, however small they are, we know about them and put them right in future sets.

Although you buy your radiogramophone primarily because of its tone, don't forget that a high standard of reproduction isn't much good if the instrument you buy has a habit of going wrong.

Frank Murphy



THE PRESENT MURPHY RADIO - GRAMOPHONE Cabinet in very beautiful Indian Laurel and Walnut with Pear Tree inlays.

Extraordinarily good reproduction made possible by high sensitivity loudspeaker installed in cabinet of special shape lined with sound-deadening material.

Black bronzed metal motor-board, flush mounted to prevent needles dropping into cabinet.

Felt-lined needle cups to prevent needle rattle.

Felt-lined lid to deaden pick-up noise and needle hiss.

Very easy to operate. Volume and tone of records controlled without lifting lid.

12-inch metal turntable with automatic stop.

High Torque Motor.

Superheterodyne Receiver. Moving Coil Speaker. Illuminated Wavelength Dial. Automatic Volume Control.

A.C. Model for 50-Cycle Mains **£26**

A.C. Models for all other cycles **£27**
D.C. Models

IN APRIL there will be another model produced at approximately £24 5s. for A.C. 50 cycles, £25 5s. for A.C. all other cycles and D.C.-A.C.

This will give exactly the same results as the present radio-gramophone, with the one difference that the range of the radio will be somewhat less.

IN JULY another model at approximately £28 5s. for A.C. 50 cycles and £29 5s. for A.C. all other cycles and D.C. only will be produced.

This will also give the same results as the present model but will have a completely new method of radio tuning.

MURPHY RADIO LTD., WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTS
TELEPHONE: WELWYN GARDEN 800

MURPHY

NEW MARCONIPHONE SUPERHETS

Jubilee Year Models For
Great 1935 Broadcasts

*DE LUXE RADIOGRAM,
CONSOLE OR TABLE GRAND
For FIVE SHILLINGS Per Week*

Radio House, London

THE NEW 5-VALVE 7-STAGE JUBILEE YEAR SUPERHETS JUST INTRODUCED BY THE MARCONIPHONE COMPANY HAVE MET WITH AN OVERWHELMING RECEPTION. THIS WAS NOT UNEXPECTED FOR NEVER BEFORE HAS SUCH REMARKABLE VALUE FOR MONEY BEEN OFFERED IN RADIO, PARTICULARLY RADIO CARRYING THE WORLD FAMOUS SIGNATURE OF THE MARCHESE MARCONI HIMSELF. THE THREE JUBILEE YEAR MODELS, THE RADIOGRAMOPHONE AT 22 GUINEAS, THE CONSOLE MODEL AT 17 GUINEAS AND THE TABLE GRAND AT 12½ GUINEAS ARE ALL AVAILABLE ON SPECIALLY ACCOMMODATING TERMS FROM FIVE SHILLINGS A WEEK, WHICH GIVES THE THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES WHO STILL SUFFER AN OLD AND OBSOLETE RADIO THE OPPORTUNITY OF OBTAINING A MODERN AND POWERFUL SUPERHET OF THE BEST KIND IN TIME FOR THE LONG SERIES OF BRILLIANT BROADCAST EVENTS PLANNED FOR JUBILEE YEAR.

Many months ago the Marconimen realised that 1935 would be a critical year in Radio. Specially attractive Jubilee programmes were being planned for British listeners at home and abroad. In addition, certain wavelength changes were scheduled by the B.B.C. So important a part will the Radio set play during 1935 that these special Jubilee Year models were designed and manufactured to meet the demand.

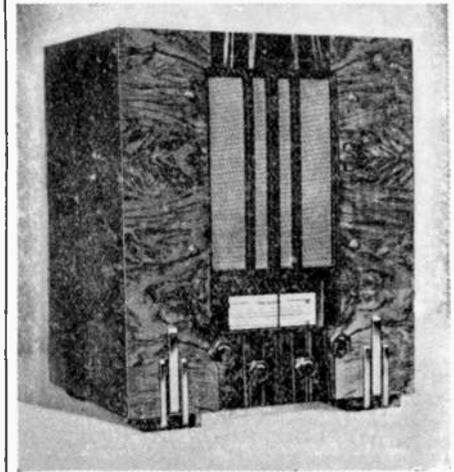
That 40 H.P. Feeling

It is estimated that well over two million old sets incapable of dealing with modern ether conditions are due for the scrap-heap, and it is expected that countless people will seize the opportunity offered now by the Marconiphone Company, the leading Radio organisation, to obtain a de luxe

Radiogram or Radio set on the easiest Purchase Plan imaginable. The owner of one of these obsolete sets who buys a Marconi Jubilee Year Superhet will experience something of the feeling that the small car owner experiences when he finds himself at the wheel of a 40 h.p. limousine—a sense of limitless power, effortless performance—a shortening of distances. Listening indeed becomes the relaxation it should be.

Super Valve Secret

From the technical point of view these Marconi Jubilee Year models are particularly impressive. The descriptive leaflets mention twenty-five of the many interesting up-to-date technical features in which the chassis abounds. The electron-coupled circuits which



The beautiful Table Grand version of the Marconi Jubilee Year Superhet which sells at only 12½ gns. (Model 264.)

are a feature of the sets, are designed largely round two very wonderful new Marconi super valves. One is the Marconi MHD4, a triple purpose double-diode-triode and the other the Marconi MX40, a non-radiating high performance detector-oscillator. These two gems of Radio Science hold the secret of the Marconi Jubilee Year chassis. It takes the advanced technician to appreciate fully many of the refinements of this new masterpiece such as the high-efficiency static suppression and the time delayed A.V.C. over 1500 to 1 signal ratio, 5-speaker power, Tone Compensated volume control, Quiet tuning and adjustable sensitivity, energised moving coil speaker with wide response speaker diaphragm and high sensitivity magnet system, and hum balancer for use on exceptionally noisy mains supplies.

Above All, Good Furniture

The great thing from the average man's outlook, however, is that while any of the three models is well within his purse, it is nevertheless a really first class piece of Radio engineering capable of mastering the present congestion of wavelengths and at the same time, a most exquisite piece of figured walnut furniture that will grace any home.

REPLACE COUNTLESS OLD SETS

The cabinets in which these models are contained are worthy of special mention. In the cold terms of the Marconi-men, they are 'acoustically smooth-matched, cross-grained and quarter veneered.' Actually they are beautiful pieces of craftsmanship, perfectly constructed to last for ever. The marquetry inlay in symmetrical quartered designs is in a class far above the average radio cabinet.

The proposed changes in B.B.C. wavelengths will not worry the Marconi Jubilee Year models in the least. They have, in fact, already ended the period of radio chaos that has existed in many homes for years. As one delighted user has already said—"It is as though someone had pacified the ether—the stations are no longer fighting each other—they have become suddenly obedient." Such is the result of six months' checking, re-checking and testing here, there and everywhere by the Marconi-men in their determination to make some worthwhile contribution to the joys of Jubilee Year.

Next time you are round the shops look for your local Marconi-men. You can identify them by the Marconi-man symbol which you will find outside their premises or in their window. The local Marconi-men will show you these new models. Ask particularly to see the Radiogramophone, because now that many of the Columbia, Parlophone and His Master's Voice records are down to 1/6 you can afford to use the gramophone side of this model much more, and thus have your favourite items always at hand.

What You Should Do

This descriptive leaflet and also the name of your local Marconi-men will be sent free, if you send a postcard to the Marconiphone Company Ltd., Radio House, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1.



The Marconi-man symbol by which you will recognise your local Marconi-man.

The finely equipped factories in which these new Marconi Jubilee Year Models are

being made are already busy day and night to meet the heavy initial orders which the Trade have placed.

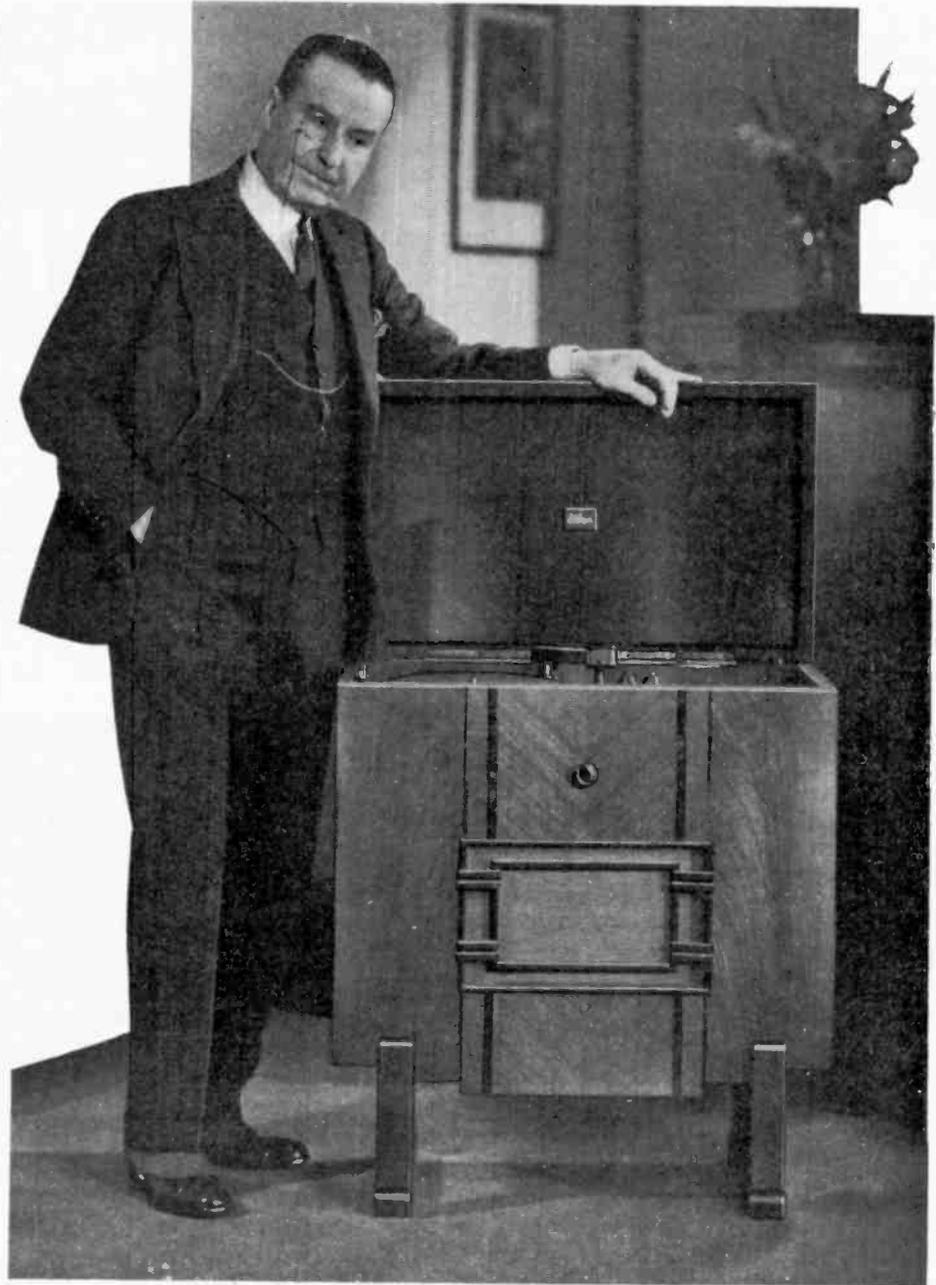


You are urged to lose no time in getting to know this new

Marconi Jubilee Year wonder set.

Already orders are eating up available supplies and amongst the first to possess the new sets it is interesting to see

many notable names.



Sir Henry Lytton is one of the first of many notable personalities to enjoy the new Marconi Jubilee Year Radiogramophone. (Model 287).

UNBELIEVABLE until you hear it . . . ASTONISHING when you do!

Whether you have a radiogram or not, a NORMA Reproducer slipped on to your ordinary gramophone in place of the existing soundbox will be a delightful revelation to you. With any ordinary gramophone, the NORMA gives you radiogram quality and richness and clarity of tone. It is no exaggeration to say you will be thrilled, just as technical experts and world-famous critics have been amazed and filled with admiration.

Let this musical miracle give new life to YOUR gramophone. Send 8/6 only—and be thrilled by a quality of reproduction you have never before experienced. State make of gramophone, and whether your present soundbox fits inside or over the tone-arm.

NORMA TECHNICAL PRODUCTS LTD.
Balfour House, 119-125 Finsbury Pavement,
London, E.C.2

Even **CHRISTOPHER STONE** accustomed to the best of the best, said: "It is the most sensational improvement of the last eight years. It astounded me!"

*Daily Express,
June 13th, 1934*

An Unsolicited Testimonial:

"I was doubtful of accepting your claims for the reproducer, but I now wish to state that your claims on its behalf are too moderate. The improvement on my high-class . . . Soundbox was little short of marvelous, and every type of record from voice to orchestra is faithfully reproduced." *G. R. E.*



THE NORMA

REPRODUCER

PAT. NO. 391033

8/6

POST FREE

Satisfaction Guaranteed

Fully descriptive pamphlet free on request

50/-
complete



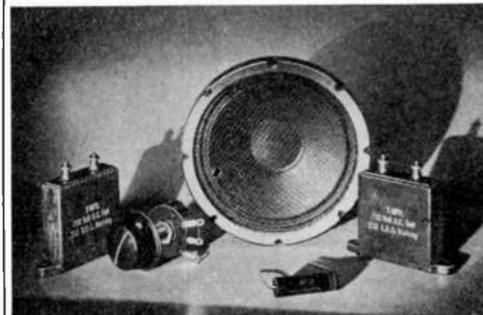
THE MELTROPE PICK-UP

The unique features of the Meltrope design reduces distortion and record wear to a minimum.

Your Dealer will gladly give you a Demonstration

AMPLIFIERS LTD
BILLET RD WALTHAMSTOW E17
TELEPHONE: LARKSWOOD 2244

Now available . . . **ROTHERMEL-BRUSH**
PIEZO-ELECTRIC
"TWEETER KIT"



To secure the best possible performance from a "Tweeter" when used in conjunction with a moving-coil speaker a filter circuit is recommended in order to level out the combined response.

- The new Rothermel-Brush "Tweeter Kit" contains the following essential units:—
- 1 R155 Rothermel-Brush Piezo-Electric Tweeter.
 - 2 1 mfd. By-pass condensers.
 - 1 Centralab graded Radiohm volume control, 25000 ohm.
 - 1 .05 non-induction condenser.

PRICE **32/6** COMPLETE

R. A. Rothermel LTD.

Rothermel House,
Canterbury Road, High Road, Kilburn, N.W.6.
Phone: Maida Vale 6066.

Get to know more about our tweeters, speakers, pick-ups and microphones by writing to-day for a copy of "PIEZO-ELECTRICITY," a technical treatise on the application of Rochelle Salts to high fidelity reproducers. Price 9d. post free.



and as both instruments were in the London Office at the same time we naturally compared them on all points and under the same conditions. Apart from this, the similarity in characteristics of the two models provides an interesting sidelight on the high degree of uniformity which the mass-producing methods employed at Hayes have attained.

We noted too the extended treble response commented upon in connection with the 444; seldom on local transmissions does one need to use full brilliance setting of the tone-control, but some foreigners can be noticeably brightened by the extra brilliance available.

On gramophone there are few records, with perhaps the exception of grand organ discs, that call for the maximum high-note setting

of the tone control; the midway position seems to provide the most satisfactory balance between treble and bass. If one uses round-shanked fibres, Burmese Colour or Voltwood needles then full brilliance can be used without surface noise becoming too intense, or the reproduction too strident.

It will be seen, therefore, that within the tone-control range and the range of frequencies which the instrument covers there is a setting to satisfy most tastes in records and transmissions; no matter if one prefers the heavy father or the terpsichorean fairy type of music this modest instrument will provide a measure of pleasure that is surprising for its calibre.

The Hartley-Turner "Baffle"

Price 50s.

If you want a thumb-nail report on this box-baffle, just consider the first two items enumerated in our report of the Hartley-Turner S12 receiver last December. Here they are:

- (1) There is not a trace of bass boom.
- (2) There are no obtrusive middle register resonances.

Then call to mind that the speaker was mounted in a box of 18-inch cube made of plywood not 1/4-inch thick. An ordinary box of this type would give rise to air-cavity resonance, to wood resonance, and, in addition, to phase distortion in low notes. The net result would be a somewhat muddy, dirty tone, which of all things in the world was precisely what the Hartley-Turner characteristic was not!

But this is not an ordinary box-baffle. It is indeed a very extraordinary one. To put it at its lowest, we like the design better than that of any other we have yet come across.

To explain its action fully would need a little excursion into the theory of acoustic wave-filters, and this is no place for that. However, even a non-technically minded reader can gain an appreciation of how it works from the following explanation.

The object of a baffle is to prevent the air-waves coming from the back of the speaker interfering with, and tending to cancel out, those from the front. Obviously, when the motion of the cone is pushing the air in front, and therefore compressing it, it is pulling at and rarefying the air behind. The forward and backward waves thus created tend to interfere with each



The H.M.V. Five-Four-One

other if the distance through the air between front and back of the cone is comparable to the wave-length of the sound being reproduced. With no baffle a loudspeaker reproduces no bass notes.

But if the baffle is thin it may be set into vibration itself and cause interference; even wood one inch thick is not free from taint.

With a box-baffle the distance through the air between the front and back of the cone is increased for a given size of frontal area, and this extends the response lower in the scale; but the very shape involves a resonant chamber behind the cone, thus producing trouble in another way.

The Hartley-Turner baffle sets out to absorb as much as possible of the sound produced from the back of the speaker and at the same time to prevent the wood of the box from being set into vibration.

It succeeds in both objects. At regular intervals across the inside of the baffle sheets of sound-absorbing material are stretched. In the centre of each sheet a hole is cut, the holes decreasing in size from the back of the speaker to the back of the box, the air column thus formed being approximately exponential. There is thus the equivalent of an exponential air column behind the horn (which itself is useful in imposing an acoustic load on the cone), and in addition a series of air cavities between the absorbent sheets to act as a sound-absorbing wave-filter.

So successful is the arrangement that with the speaker working at large volume only very faint sounds, and those of very low pitch, can be heard coming from the back of the speaker even when the ear is placed within a few inches of the back of the baffle; whilst to the touch the baffle itself is as dead as the proverbial mutton. All within an 18-inch cube, mind you.

We understand that other sizes of baffle are available. One measures 18 in. by 18 in. by 12 in. and costs £2. Another measures 21-inch cube and costs £3 15s.

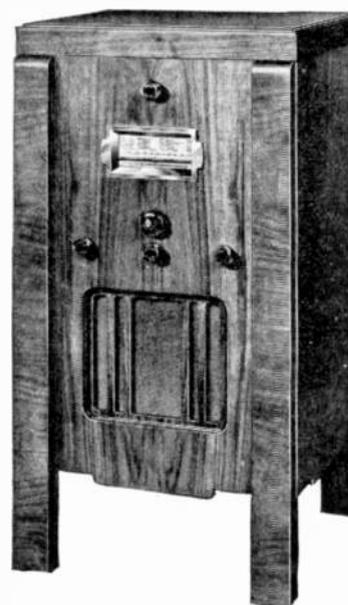
There can be no doubt that this baffle is a substantial contribution to loudspeaker design and to the cause of undefiled reproduction generally.

The Cossor Super-Ferrodyne Radiogram Model 536

Price 16 guineas

Specification.

- H.F. Stage:—Cossor MVSG Valve.*
- Power-Grid Detector:—Cossor MS₁Pen Valve.*
- Power Stage:—Cossor PT41 Valve.*
- Rectifier:—Cossor 442 BU Valve.*
- Power Output:—3 Watts (approx.).*
- L.F. Coupling:—Resistance-Capacity.*
- Loudspeaker:—Electro-Magnet M.C.*
- Speaker Coupling:—Transformer.*
- Motor:—Induction Type.*
- Consumption:—70 Watts (approx.).*
- Wave Range:—200-560 and 800-2,000 Metres.*
- Voltage Range:—200-250 A.C.; 50-60 Cycles.*
- Provision for Auxiliary Speaker.*



The Cossor Super-Ferrodyne

Here is a radio-gramophone that has at least one distinction over all others that have passed through our hands; its price is the

least. A year or two ago an instrument of this type at such a figure was an undreamed-of possibility. One might suppose that to do this means cheeseparing both in quality of workmanship and materials, but that supposition would be entirely wrong. Both cabinet and chassis are sturdy and well finished and the motor and pick-up are both standard components on which we have previously conferred our blessings.

The radio receiver is what we should term a local-station set, though actually it has the ability to receive a fair number of alternative programmes from the Continent at adequate volume levels; we logged sixteen here in Soho Square. For a "straight" set the selectivity is relatively high. Tuning is not so sharp as a superhet, however, nor do we expect it, but interference is not sufficiently marked to be a source of annoyance, except, of course, when tuned in to Luxembourg; to cut out interference from Warsaw is more than even the average *superhet* receiver can do.

The reproduction of both radio and records is smooth and pleasant; there are none of the usual indications of a pentode

power stage; the treble is bright without undue peakiness even at full volume, and attack and articulation are satisfactory. There are some indications of bass discoloration by wood resonance at the maximum volume setting, but at normal levels it is minimised, with a considerable improvement in definition of the lower frequencies. These comments apply also to radio reception. Surface noise on gramophone, always a fair guide as to high note response, is noticeable, but is not of the intense variety which usually suggests peakiness between 2,500-3,000 cycles. Hum is absolutely negligible, so low that at a distance of 4 feet away from the instrument it is barely discernible.

The illustration gives some idea of the controls lay-out; the knob above the tuning dial, which by the way is illuminated according to the setting of the wavechange switch, controls gramophone volume, and the bottom three knobs (from left to right) are reaction, radio volume, and the combined mains, wavechange and radio-to-gramophone switch. The remaining knobs are the tuner and trimmer.

Trade Winds and Idle Zephyrs

Here is a statement, dated January 31st, 1935, which we have received from Electric and Musical Industries Ltd. and which we print verbatim:

"Electric and Musical Industries Ltd. express very great satisfaction with the report of the Television Committee published to-day, which states that television broadcasting will be started in Great Britain. We expect that in the course of years television will become a very large industry in this country.

"We assume, of course, that the B.B.C., who are to control this new development, will take the necessary steps in the shortest possible time to start the broadcasting of high-definition television.

"As and when the B.B.C. begin broadcasting high-definition television, Electric and Musical Industries will be ready to market television receiving sets. It is much too early to state at the present time what the price of these sets will be, but we believe that the price mentioned in the Committee's report of £50 to £80 will be more or less correct.

"It must be clear to everyone that in the early stages of this industry, as is true of any other new industry, the first years of working will be very largely experimental, and it will take some time before television is developed on a large commercial scale.

"We quite agree with the Committee's report that radio sound broadcasting will still, for many a year to come, dominate the B.B.C. programmes. Moreover, we do not believe that television will in any way interfere with the developments in radio sound broadcasting with its ever increasing entertainment value. Therefore, our Company, as well as all other manufacturers in the radio industry, are going right ahead with the development of the manufacture and sale of radio sets for sound."

Meanwhile, Baird Television Ltd. have already demonstrated to the Press their preparedness as regard the production of high-definition Television instruments.

Two types of cathode ray receiver were demonstrated, each having a range of about twenty-five miles. Both instruments gave well-defined pictures, but the larger model seemed to give rather better results by virtue of the black and white image as against the brown and yellow image of the smaller instrument.

The latter, it is expected, will cost round about £50 (or less under mass-production conditions) and the large model will be priced somewhere near the £80 mark. Each will be complete in itself, requiring no accessories beyond a vertical aerial.

TELEVISION?

New Marconiphone Speaker

On February 9th, 1935, the Marconiphone range of instruments was still further augmented by the addition of a new loudspeaker, Model 195.

It is a cabinet type permanent magnet model fitted with 9-ohm impedance speech coil and is primarily intended as an extension speaker for the Marconiphone 292 radio-gramophone.

It is also suitable for use with models 289 and 296, or any other instrument where a low-impedance output is provided for the auxiliary speaker. It is not, however, a universal speaker as no input transformer is included.

The speaker is fitted with an elliptical diaphragm, a "constant impedance type" volume control (or, in other words, a T-pad) which gives complete control of volume without affecting the quality or volume from the parent speaker, and there is also a tone-compensating device designed to preserve a satisfactory balance between treble and bass irrespective of the volume level.

The price is 8 guineas.

"La Donna è Mobile"

"Woman is Fickle" sings the philandering Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*.

Had he lived in this mechanised age, no doubt, like others of exalted rank, he would at some time or other have developed an interest in wireless, gramophone or personal recording on aluminium discs; then he would have learned something of fickleness; particularly with regard to the aluminium discs, or for that matter, anything made of that fickle metal or its associated alloys—Duralmin or Y alloy.

At any rate, we have always regarded these metals as fickle to polish or work, and as we are well aware many manufacturers in the gramophone and wireless trades have had their little difficulties.

So far as we are concerned, however, our troubles are now over (or at least we think they are, for one can never tell with the fair sex and aluminium) since reading and inwardly digesting a book—*Aluminium Facts and Figures*—recently published by the British Aluminium Company Ltd. Almost every fact and figure about aluminium and its innumerable uses in commerce are given within its pages, including chapters on polishing, annealing, anodising, spinning, forging, casting, etc., etc. The book is beautifully produced and is available to wireless and gramophone manufacturers on application to the company at Adelaide House, King William Street, London, E.C.4.

A New Publication

Besides covering a good deal of ground on the evolution and post-war developments of the superhet this book, *The Superheterodyne Receiver*, by Alfred T. Witts, A.M.I.E.E. (Pitman, 3s. 6d.), outlines the broad principles of superhet reception and discusses the problems of the superhet receiver in a lucid manner.

Quite wisely the author avoids the temptation to bring in practical hints in the design or operation of such receivers; he aims at presenting a straightforward theoretical survey, and succeeds well. The chapters on Single Valve Frequency Changers and Automatic Volume Control are of particular interest.

To those who would know their receivers we cordially recommend this book.

Wireless Magic

A lecture on Resistances and Condensers hardly sounds like an exciting or entertaining affair. Yet that was what the Agricola Society found it to be on February 19th; but they

had the attractive personality, the keen wit, and the skilful showmanship of Mr. Higginson of the Dubilier Condenser Co. to help them.

After an explanation of the characteristics of various types of these important elements of electrical apparatus, an explanation which was as lucid to the novice as it was instructive even to hard-baked folk like ourselves, the lecturer proceeded to perform some most illuminating and humorous tricks by the aid of a filter arrangement in his amplifier built up entirely of resistances and condensers.

Besides illustrating the effect of attenuating different frequency ranges, he adjusted the filter so as to bring into relief the various parts of an ordinary commercial record: at one time violins would stand out, at another wood-wind, and so on.

Then he successfully reproduced sounds chosen by the audience from a number written down on slips and placed in a bag: a simple but effective piece of Maskelyner.

There was not a dull moment. But the audience would dearly have loved to know what particular combination of resistances and condensers there was in that filter.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Being Extracts from Technical Correspondence

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

Resonance

267 Q.—I am building a gramophone and intend using a metal horn and a cabinet with plywood sides. Do you think there will be an appreciable amount of resonance from the horn or the cabinet?

A.—Much, of course, depends on the gauge of material the horn is made of and the thickness of the wood you use for the cabinet. If the metal for the horn is of rather thin gauge then wrapping it bandagewise with insulation tape will minimise it. With regard to the cabinet, do not use less than $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch material. To reduce resonance still further, you could pack the cavities between horn and cabinet with slag wool or some similar absorbent material.

Motor Lubricant

268 Q.—(a) Which is the best way to remove congealed graphite grease from the springs of a gramophone motor?

(b) Is it essential that graphite grease be used when reassembling the drums, or will a high-grade motor grease do for lubricating the springs?

A.—(a) The best way to remove grease is to soak and then wash the springs in paraffin. But make certain that they are clean on both sides, and thoroughly dry off the paraffin before reinsertion into the spring barrel.

(b) It is not an essential that graphite grease be used, though it is preferable. Be careful when repacking the drums not to fill them too full, otherwise the springs will not expand uniformly and in consequence the motor will "bump."

Hill and Dale

269 Q.—I have several Pathé records which are of the hill and dale type of recording, and should be glad if you would let me know whether it is possible to play these with a B.T.H. senior pick-up, using the original sapphire needle but turning the pick-up at right angles by means of an elbow. If this is possible let

me know what angle the needle shank should make with the record.

A.—It is impossible to use a pick-up designed for lateral recorded discs for hill and dale recordings. The weight of the pick-up head will give the armature both a mechanical and magnetic bias, and in consequence it will freeze on to the uppermost pole-piece thereby rendering reproduction hopeless. The needle angle for playing hill and dale records should be about 85 degrees.

Warped Records

270 Q.—I have been in the habit of storing my records in the albums issued with them, but I notice that the majority of them are warping badly. Will they be damaged if I play them in this condition? If so, how can I straighten them?

A.—We do not advise you to continue playing the badly warped discs. If you do record wear will be the result. Perhaps the best advice we can give is to get a copy of our handbook *Gramophones, Acoustic and Radio*, in which effective methods of straightening warped records and storing records are described.

Long Pick-up Leads

271 Q.—Is it detrimental to quality if I use long leads between the pick-up and my receiver? Roughly the distance between set and pick-up is about 40 feet.

A.—Yes: high note loss and hum may result. Try using metal screened cable and interpose a 1:1 transformer (placed as near to the receiver as possible) between the set and pick-up in order that what is in effect the grid of the first valve is not extended to a considerable distance outside the set.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Composers of To-day, compiled and edited by David Ewen.
New York: H. W. Wilson Co. \$4.50.

A useful set of two hundred short biographies, without much criticism. What there is is mostly praise, as might be expected. The critics quoted are not all first-rate. There are portraits of nearly every composer. The ranks include a good many little-known Americans (which is all to the good, even, perhaps when those who have "dignified jazz" are there); but no little-known Englishmen appear, the only ones listed (two dozen) being the big or pretty-big men. A few works by each composer are named, and important recordings are identified—a useful service. The ideal service would be to name *all* publishers—a thing very few editors will toil about; but naming books without their publishers is tiresome; and isn't it, after all, just laziness? There is also a "Bibliography of Modern Music." The book will interest those who like "personal pars"—such as that Holbrooke once earned so miserable a living that he had to eat vegetables instead of meat (but what says vegetarian Dr. Scholes about that?); that one composer loves strong cheeses and old hats (his own, exclusively?); that Stravinsky has "no false sham [*sic*] about his own achievement"; that Gershwin, Berners, Migot and Ruggles are talented painters, Haba and Saminsky mathematicians, Deems Taylor a cabinet-maker; and, most curious (to me), that "Cyril Scott has made contributions to adult education." Mr. Ewen is such a forward-looking editor that he allows me to read, on January 16th, that Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* "was introduced in America in Cleveland on January 31st, 1935, under the baton of Artur Rodzinski . . ." A handy book for editors, and for those who like some facts about everybody whose music they hear, or are likely to hear. It is, like too many American books, bulked up to excessive weight with heavy art-paper, and it is, of course, expensive. I suppose it would cost about 25s. here.

W. R. A.

Alice in Orchestra Land, by Ernest La Prade, with a foreword by Dr. Malcolm Sargent, F.R.C.M. Cobden-Sanderson. 3s. 6d.

Alice goes by Tuba to Fiddladelphia, the capital of Orchestra Land, is introduced by a benevolent double bass to a string quartet which makes music with dummies out of cupboards. Alice thinks they are human beings, but no, they are only musicians, says the Double Bass, and dummies at that. While the instruments are busily engaged in wiping the rosin from their strings, Alice is presented. She meets the handsome amber First Violin. He looks rather conceited, and naturally, for he comes of one of the first families in Cremona—the Stradivari. The Second Violin is a good sort but only a Tyrolean; the Viola, poor fellow, claims to be a Gagliano, but has lost his pedigree. That's why he is so sad, perhaps, but Violas are generally sad, unlike the 'Cellos, who are always in high spirits, even when they've lost their pedigrees. This one was a Vuillaume, with the true Gallic temperament and well thought of in the community—"but, of course, he isn't a Strad."

Then to Panopolis, where she meets the Wood-wind, the rather nasal Oboe, the gallant Clarinet, the cheeky Piccolo, and all their relations. Then to Brassydale to meet the band, whence the Trumpet conducts her to the Battery for inspection of the Artillery. The grand finale is a concert in Orchestra Land, from which she awakes to find Schubert's Symphony in C, which had sent her to sleep, finishing with a crash and her mother beckoning to her to come along—"We mustn't miss our train."

Never was powder with jam more skilfully blended than in this delightful dream. There is scarcely a word of the chatty conversation of those instrumental personalities that is not in some way instructive as well as amusing. Then the whetted appetite can turn to the Appendix, which gives a clear and common-sense description of the orchestra and all its parts, followed by short biographies of the great orchestra builders. An invaluable little book for young and old.

F.‡.

SCHOOL GRAMOPHONE
NOTES

by W. W. JOHNSON

(Continued from page 330, January)

CLOSELY connected with the "Playways" series (discussed in this column last month) are the "Let's Pretend" Rhythmic Games records planned by Mrs. Nancy Henry. Mrs. Henry is a lecturer who has had wide and varied experience with thousands of young children, and her understanding of their needs has led her to arrange this charming collection of pieces which occupy three ten-inch records. It is doubtful whether the set is as well known or as well used in schools as it might be: infant teachers in particular should make a point of hearing the records, make application for the explanatory leaflet, and decide whether this is not a good investment at seven-and-sixpence.

These thirty or more well-chosen extracts have been grouped and arranged for small orchestra by Lawrence Collingwood. They are intended to provide a stimulus for small children in order that they act naturally yet rhythmically, there being no stereotyped method of performance, since everything is pure pretence. Thus each child thinks and moves in his own way in sympathy with the rhythm of the music.

The initial game (on the first side of H.M.V. B8098) gives the pupils opportunity for miming a circus. The class forms a ring, heralds appear, the ringmaster arrives with his ponies, clowns, and acrobats, followed by a display by high-stepping horses. The entire performance is given impromptu, the duration of the music determining the length of the item. The children forming the ring, who represent the audience, applaud the performers at the end of each "turn."

It is interesting to note that the music is not specially composed for these games of pretence: each is a series of fragments from the works of the master musicians. In "The Circus," for instance, the opening flourish is the march from Verdi's *Aida*. On hearing this the heralds march forward and the show commences. The ring-master enters as soon as he hears the first notes of the "Preamble" from Schumann's *Carnaval Suite*. A wisp of melody from the first movement of Schubert's *Symphony in C major* is the signal for arrival of the trotting ponies, while the clowns and acrobats perform their antics to "Arlequin" from the *Carnaval Suite*. The circus ends with one of Mozart's *German Dances*, an apt accompaniment for the parade of the high-stepping horses.

All the above musical extracts appear on the first side of B8098; on the reverse are five more extracts intended for use in playing the game of "Helping in the House"—brushing boots, sweeping floors, beating eggs, and so on. One little section, entitled "Holding and winding wool," is especially intriguing, since half the pupils are "holding the skein" while the other half "wind the ball," each group performing to one of the two simultaneous rhythms in the music—part of "Entracte No. 3" from Schubert's *Rosamunde*. This is an excellent device for compelling concentrated listening, and the teacher can see at a glance which pupils fail. The remaining games in the series are "Fairy World" and "Playing with Toys" (on B8099), and "Day at the Seaside" and "At the Fair" (on B8100). The explanatory leaflet points out that each game may be played in a variety of ways.

In the hands of an enthusiastic teacher the three records in this set may be used as a stimulus for endless amusement and very valuable rhythmic and aural training. These, like the "Playways" records, are material for musical appreciation lessons of a specialised type for very young pupils, for each short piece of music is good in itself, and of such nature that it lays the foundations for a more thorough kind of training in later years.

Random Reflections

THE OBOE IN CHAMBER MUSIC

by W. A. CHISLETT

It has always been mildly surprising to me that wind instruments are not heard more often in chamber music, either by themselves or in combination with strings or piano; for many of the works in this form with which I am familiar are distinctly attractive. Composers and performers doubtless unite in blaming the general public, which rarely shows any particular anxiety to hear chamber music of any sort, for this state of affairs; but probably in addition the composers say to themselves, "If we write such works they will never be played," and the performers think that the available repertoire is so comparatively limited that it is hardly worth while getting a team together.

Particularly am I surprised that the combination of oboe and strings is not utilised more frequently. The one seems to me to be, within certain limits, an excellent foil for the other.

Admittedly the range of the oboe is somewhat narrow. Forsyth, in his excellent book "Orchestration," describes it as essentially a middle compass instrument and declares that "all the best oboe solos" have been written within the very

narrow compass of

TURN TABLE TALK

Desert Island Competition

Youth wins the day in this contest. J. W. Bazalgette, aged sixteen, romps away with the prize. The winning list by popular vote is: Bach's *B minor Mass* (far ahead of the rest); Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony*; Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*; Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*; Beethoven's *Third (Eroica) Symphony*; Brahms's *Fourth Symphony*.

No competitor succeeded in getting more than three of these on his list, but J. W. Bazalgette gives the next two most popular works, Mozart's *Quintet in G minor* and Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*. His (or her) only failure is Haydn's *Farewell Symphony*. Papa Haydn, sad to relate, comes very badly out of the fray.

But the standard of voting is high. One of our most faithful readers sends in a double entry, one to meet the popular vote, "a guess at what works are most popular with GRAMOPHONE readers," and the other his own true choice. Let him take heart! His own list is by far the more popular. True, the *Fifth* and the *Unfinished* are in his "guessing" list, but of the rest, *Tannhäuser* had one vote, the *New World* three, *Pinafore* one, and the *Nutcracker Suite* none. The voting was keen on Beethoven's late quartets, especially the *C sharp minor* (131) and the *A minor* (132), which last appears in our reader's own list, and so does *Meistersinger*, also the favourite Wagner work.

Elgar's *Enigma Variations* were well fancied: at one time it seemed as though *The Messiah* would top the list, and Sibelius Symphonies, especially the Seventh and Fourth, were popular. A very interesting competition.

"The Gipsy Baron"

The Alan Turner Opera Company has plenty of pluck. Johann Strauss's *The Gipsy Baron* is an ambitious work for an amateur company to tackle and we note that their next effort will be *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*. The five performances of *The Baron* beginning February 12th benefited several deserving charities, and delighted large, enthusiastic audiences. £1,200 has been raised since 1927. Applications for membership of this excellent company should be sent to Northdown House, Northdown Street, N.I. Amateurs only, of course.

Folk Music

On Sunday, March 17th, at 5.30 p.m., Mr. Rodney Gallop will give a lecture-recital on "The Folk Music of Spain and Portugal" at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, N.W.1 (Nearest Underground Station, Camden Town. Buses, 3, 58, 74, 169). The illustrations will be furnished by gramophone records of authentic folk singers and instrumentalists. Admission will be free, but there will be a collection on behalf of the International Folk Dance Festival to be held next July.

Thelma Reiss

Strange that no recording company has made a contract with this remarkably gifted young 'cellist. She has already an European reputation. Madrid actually compared her with its idol Casals. Beyond her mastery of the glorious Montagnana instrument she plays, beyond her intelligence, sureness and musicianship, there is magic—that rare quality which *does* get through the microphone when it gets a chance! Why shouldn't it?

"Music-lover's Guide"

Peter Hugh Reed and Drummond McKay, lately of the New York Band Instrument Company, are responsible for the above magazine which should fill a gap in America, where musical papers treating worthily of the gramophone are hard to come by.

"Musical Companion" Competition

W. R. A. begs to announce that 17 per cent. of the solutions corresponded completely with that sealed and placed in the Editor's hands; another 22 per cent. were partially, but not completely, correct; 35 per cent. found another slip, and so deserve honourable (or, from the author's point of view, dishonourable?) mention; while of the rest all but one found either a misspelling which the author had cherished all his life, or mares' nests which he hopes *they* will not. One really good new slip only was discovered; and there remains hidden one treasure which, it seems, no living soul has found: amen to that! The prize-winner, chosen by the hand of Fate, is Mr. Frederick H. Noll, of Upper Tooting. It being impracticable to reply to all, thanks are hereby returned for various pleasant words about the book.

The Gramophone in Education

A questionnaire has been circulated among educational institutions by the Commission of Enquiry into the Educational Use of the Gramophone. No less than sixteen pages will be filled in (it is hoped) by teachers of music and languages who use records.

The final report on this is expected to cause no small stir in educational circles, where the importance of the gramophone is just beginning to be realised. If any of our readers engaged in education has not received this document, application to the Secretary, British Institute of Adult Education, 39 Bedford Square, W.C.1, will bring him a copy.

A Chance for Someone

THE GRAMOPHONE complete for 1934 is offered by a generous reader. First come, first served, so don't delay with a postcard to this office.

"Re Walnut Trees"

The Editor's comments on "Isle of Capri" in our last issue have called forth an indignant protest from the enchanted island. Walnuts, we are told, grow there in abundance and are actually exported. But it continues to call itself *Capri* and has not altered its tidal arrangements. The tune of this famous song is, by a curious coincidence, almost identical with a popular Spanish song called *Adonde vas con manto de Manila* ("Where are you going in your Manila shawl?").

Recordings Wanted

Our readers ask for the following:
A new recording of the *Beethoven Concerto* by Kreisler.
Sir Thomas Beecham in a little Wagner for a change—say the *Parsifal Prelude* and Second Scene of the Third Act.
Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* (violin, 'cello and piano).
Elgar's *Sea Pictures*.
Brahms's *Second Symphony* by Bruno Walter and the B.B.C. Orchestra.

L'Anthologie Sonore

Mr. E. M. Ginn, 10a Soho Square, W.1, has now been appointed sole concessionaire throughout the British Empire.

Guy's Hospital

I have received a record of the music composed for the Guy's Hospital Residents' Play which was recently produced.

The purpose of this note is to draw attention to the record, the proceeds from the sale of which go to the Hospital, firstly as an entertaining and pleasing record, and secondly in case there may be any old Guy's men who are also readers of THE GRAMOPHONE and who would no doubt be most interested to have it. Copies may be obtained from Guy's Hospital, London, S.E.1.

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Every Gramophonist must of necessity possess some records in his collection that he has ceased to take pleasure in hearing and the problem of what he is to do with them is bound to crop up from time to time.

At the same time, there are new records being issued which he would like to possess, and, either he has not room for them, or cannot quite afford them, or already possesses them in a previous and usually not so good issue. This is where The Gramophone Exchange becomes, to the record collector, perhaps the most useful firm in the whole trade.

Send us the records your are tired of in part payment for the new records you want. You will receive quite a generous allowance for them and thus keep your collection always up to date.

We stock every new record issued by all the best-known Companies and NO new record is ever touched with a steel needle.

Next month we will tell you what happens to the records we take from you in exchange and how you can visit our Exchanged Record Department and purchase fibre-played records of all the best music at half list prices.

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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.]

DURING the last month I renewed my acquaintance, after a lapse of twenty-five years, with the man who sold the first gramophone. I found him, and one of his original colleagues, approaching their fortieth year of service with the firm who held the earliest agency for G. & T., and even I was not forgotten as the unlucrative customer who took so keen an interest in the first issue of Red Label records, which seemed then, as they seem still, to be something too romantic to be quite real.

Within a week I made the acquaintance of one of the first singers to make disc records of serious songs; this was **Louis Breeze**, now seventy-five years old, but still, as he puts it, with some voice left, "although we cannot all be Peter Pans like Ben Davies!" Louis Breeze recorded for Berliner, and afterwards in 1901 for G. & T.; and I have been able to find for him a couple of his original "plain backs" of that year as souvenirs of those days. One day he is going to tell me all his memories of the old Maiden Lane studio, when, I believe, singers were kept repeating the same song all day, before the days of "masters"; but he well remembers the occasion of **Dan Leno's** first visit, and his surprise that so great a comedian should feel so nervous. He was the first vocalist, he thinks, to sing to an orchestra, consisting of brass and wood-wind (strings not then being possible), and "as they were all crowded round the receiver," he said, "you can judge it was pleasant to have the trombones, cornets, flute, etc., going full pelt into one's ears!" The late Airlie Dix, of *Trumpeter* fame, did the arranging and conducting in the early days, and there was a sort of stage manager at the back who pulled the singer backward or pushed him forward according to the volume of tone.

Earlier readers will remember that **Mme. Emma Eames** told me of much the same practice when she recorded in America in 1904-5.

I can dwell on the past pleasantly, I hope, a little longer, since my remarks on **de Lucia's** alleged tremolo, which I loosely termed vibrato, have produced a number of unusually interesting letters. One in particular from a correspondent whom I will call "Mr. B." resulted in digressions altogether delightful, and culminated in a visit to one of the most beautifully equipped private collections of musical and other treasures it has been my good fortune to see. A connoisseur and patron of music of an almost eighteenth-century kind, Mr. B. seemed to be acquainted or intimately associated with nearly every artist, past and present, that one could name; he is in his seventy-eighth year, and looks exactly sixty-three; was for two years a pupil of Maurel; he heard "M. de Reschi" sing Don Giovanni in 1874, and thereafter became one of Jean de Reszke's most fervid admirers. Mr. B. speaks of the "post-Jean" opera-goers with the same regret as we speak of the "post-Caruso" generation: he says that we can have simply no conception of the beauty of Jean's singing, because there has been nothing with which to compare it since. I was thrilled by some personal souvenirs of Maurel, and delighted by Mr. B.'s imitation of his attempts to render *Quand'ero paggio* in English, a language which he did not speak.

But I fear I am digressing also, but need I apologise? When so much is hearsay and tradition, is it not a privilege to be given an actual glimpse into the very Golden Age itself? On that afternoon I saw, or might have seen, had there been time, the whole panorama of Covent Garden, since that night in 1874 when M. de Reschi made an instant success as Don Giovanni, and during all that pageant of the almost fabulous singers on whose actual merits we are already beginning to

speculate (and quite unnecessarily, as I now know), taking in its stride the Tamagno and Maurel season of *Otello* at the Lyceum, the Olympian majesty of Van Rooy and Ternina, and the coming and going of the little Neapolitan who sang *Vesti la giubba* so remarkably well, down to the time of the twilight and dissolution of Italian Opera, and of the stalwart but ageing "stage army" that to-day gives the appearance of life to the music-dramas of Richard Wagner.

But now to return to earth. Mr. B. was emphatic that **de Lucia** had no tremolo in the Covent Garden days; and **Ben Davies**, whom I have had the great advantage of consulting on the matter, fully confirms this. The following is reproduced with his permission:—"What I remember of **de Lucia** is that he had not so much of a tremolo as a slight vibrato, like nearly all Italian tenors, and which was only evident in dramatic passages. His voice was of the 'white' order, which was suited (not that I ever admired this type of production) to *Pagliacci*, especially in the *Vesti la giubba*." Mr. Davies once sang a duet with him—Tosti's *Serenata* specially arranged by Randegger. "De Lucia and Ancona (he added) were extremely popular in the old Covent Garden days, and were especially welcome in *Pagliacci*. Ancona had a fine, steady voice, but was not a great musician."

I put to Mr. Davies a theory that a tremolo that is noticeable in a small apartment would "flatten out," so to speak, at a distance; but he would have none of it—"utter nonsense," he said, "how can it steady itself when the source is all of a quiver? The real reason for tremolo (he continued) is that the breath escapes with the tone, instead of being behind the voice. I never heard the tremolo in the real good old singers—Reeves, de Reszke, Battistini never had it."

Just before hearing this authoritative view I had taken breakfast (at 1 p.m.), and had two hours' solid chat, with **Beniamino Riccio**, the world-famous baritone, who made his *début* at our Albert Hall ten years ago, and who, by the time these words are printed, may have sung there again. He made merry over the confusion in my terms respecting tremolo and vibrato, and proceeded to demonstrate, in a voice that left my head tingling as though from a blow, the difference between the two. Signor Riccio's views on the "flattening out" theory were exactly identical with those to be expressed later by Ben Davies.

Mr. Hubert Brown, the author of the recently published "Complete Singing Teacher" (John Bale, London, 5s.), of which he has sent me a copy, calls attention in his work to the difference between "wobble" and "vibration," also to the dangers attendant upon too great a fear of developing a "wobble." In fact, the whole chapter on "Tone Placing and Resonance" will make thrilling reading to those collectors who are interested in the problem without caring to study it too deeply. Turning to the gramophone, Mr. Brown remarks: "The ear of the gramophone devotee becomes so attuned to the gramophone's discolouring of the original tone that it will much prefer the gramophone rendering to an original performance. . . ." Exactly what "C.C." has been preaching all along, and which is even truer of the wireless, which generally is less faithful in reproduction than the modern gramophone. The wireless should not be despised, however, since it affords unlimited opportunities for studying examples of wobble and vibration respectively in their most pronounced forms.

There is, however, this to be said for **de Lucia's** critics, that the period of his perfection ended in 1906, in which year a difference becomes faintly discernible; and in 1907 and onwards the resonance of tone gave place to a "breathi-

ness" which, as Mr. Davies has shown, is conducive to tremolo. When I add that de Lucia continued to record until almost the year of his death in 1926, it will be seen how unfairly his *real* singing career may be judged.

K. H.-L. (Copenhagen) sends me the astonishing news of the discovery of a record, presumably genuine, by **Christine Nilsson**! and that an offer equivalent to forty pounds by a Swedish State Department has been declined. This is all I am able to say at present, and we shall await further news with intense interest.

K. H.-L. propounds the riddle of those celebrity records having the 1901 flat label. I do not know the answer. We know that the old *large* flat label, sometimes with plain-backed discs, belonged to the earliest 10-inch issue, which was made in 1901, and that in 1902 the standard size raised label appeared. But this is not to say that January 1st and December 31st saw the beginning and ending of these styles; and although we may take it that by May 1902 (the date of the first Red Labels) the new pattern was in use, it is still not surprising to find copies occasionally of Red Labels in the earlier type, though of smaller size, and I know of examples by Caruso, Van Rooy, Figner, Vialtzeva and others. But the real difficulty is when we find, as K. H.-L. has found, a record by Garbin, dated in "R.M." 1903, with the same flat label. Is "R.M." wrong? No; I will back my memory that Garbin did not appear in the 1902 catalogue; and that neither did de Lucia, whom I also have in "flat" form. So when 1903 records turn up in the clumsy and obsolete 1901 form, it is confusing. Patti's records were exceptional, of course, all her original issue having flat labels.

Reply to J. S. (Bulawayo): **Caruso's** *La donna è mobile* (2-52641) appears in Mr. Drummond's list under the date March 1908 as DA561, and *O sole mio* (7-52092) under February 1916 as DA123. It would be difficult to put a date to John McCormack's record of *Dear old pal of mine*; and I am afraid I cannot be more helpful about Werrenrath, who, as you say, "appears to be nearly first-class."

Reply to W. H. C. (Stamford Hill): The question whether modern pressings of early records are better or worse than earlier pressings depends, I believe, upon whether or not new matrices have been used; sometimes they have, and sometimes they have not.

F. C. (Dublin) is anxious to put us right about the idea that Ireland cannot produce rarities, and kindly sends a list which shows that he, at least, has been able to do so. There are three of **Battistini's** original Orange Label series, one of **Kubelik's** of 1902, **Melba's** 1904 *Lucia* and her *Good-bye* of 1910, **Alice Esty** in *Elsa's Dream*, and **Patti** in *Pur dicesti*. But I have kept till last **Sobinoff's** *Pêcheur des Perles* and *Werther* airs of 1904, and **Albani's** *Angels ever bright and fair*, the most coveted, the most abused, and the most extraordinary singing curiosity ever issued. (May I say that the rumour that I have parted with my copy is much exaggerated?)

A correspondent whose calling I should like to be able to reveal, but may only describe as C. W. (Salop), writes to me for the first time and says that he has acquired back numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE to 1929, in order to trace the progress of "C.C." He expresses amusement at the unconscious irony of a remark by me some time ago to the effect that one of the advantages of early record collecting was its cheapness (alas, yes), and he asks what is the highest price yet paid for a record. I am quite sure that many collectors have wondered the same thing, but I can only say that neither the highest nor the lowest prices seem to be any guide to what may happen next. Reports have reached me of a certain speculative frenzy here and there which suggests that some collectors at least are buying their experience rather dearly.

This seems a suitable occasion for sounding a warning to inexperienced collectors who may be offered "rarities" of a dubious nature at fancy prices. There is evidence enough of a desire to turn the craze for old records to profitable account,

without always the requisite knowledge to ensure a fair deal to both parties, and Collectors' Corner, as the *fons et origo* of the cult, may be permitted to take an interest in the well-being of its devotees. A somewhat unusual case has lately been brought to my notice, an actual fake—a so-called "pirated" disc of a record carrying a false description and offered for sale as an exceptional rarity.* This is the first time that anything so ugly has invaded our little paradise, and I hope that this will serve to warn all concerned of the dangers of "a little knowledge." I hope this warning will suffice, as "C.C." will not fail to bring to the notice of the Editors any further matter concerning advertisers which may seem to require their attention.

The passing of **Mme. Marcella Sembrich** removes yet another of the great operatic figures of the nineteenth century whose art has fortunately been preserved by the gramophone. Although her Covent Garden appearances seem almost lost in the mists of time, her records, or rather the earliest of them, come well within the strictest collector's purview. None were made in England, but her original Columbias, made in 1903, were on sale here, and her Victors of 1904-5 were issued in England with the European label and numbering. Being about forty-five when she first recorded, it is reasonable to suppose that her voice was not at its freshest, but she had in the highest degree that serenity and ease of production which distinguishes the greatest exponents of the true *bel canto*. Her style was the reverse of "showy," in fact it was almost austere; even her *coloratura*, which was notable, was correct rather than merely fireworky, and in her first recording of *Ah, fors' è lui* she actually omitted any shake: probably in *Sempre libera*, the proper place for brilliancy, she would have given plenty had she recorded it. One of my treasures is a perfect original copy of her *Ah, non giunge in Sonnambula*, and a veritable gem it is, and although it lacks something of the joyousness of **Selma Kurz's** record, it has that air of solid experience and achievement that is so unmistakably of the Golden Age. Her records, which include many never issued in England, and dating until 1912, will be of immense value to such fortunate students as may be able to obtain them, especially such things as *Casta Diva*, *Batti, batti*, and *Deh vieni non tardar*. Her duet with **Scotti** in *Don Pasquale*, although poorly recorded, is a perfect example of vocal poise and technique; she makes it sound so easy, and with so little effort; while the way in which she dominated the contesting voices of **Caruso**, **Scotti** and **Journet** in that wonderful star sextet in *Lucia*, in 1908, apparently without once raising her voice, is a thing of joy.

Yet another of those who are now spoken of as "collectors' artists" has departed this life. This is **Alice Esty**, the very distinguished English *prima donna* whose association with the Moody-Manners and the Carl Rosa Opera Companies in their palmy days did much to emphasise the excellence of their performances. I have referred to Mme. Esty in "C.C." in April and September last year, and will repeat that when I recall Marguerite to my mind, it is invariably hers which leaps to my memory. Mme. Esty will go down to history as the creator in this country of Mimi in *La Bohème* and of Eva in *Die Meistersinger*; while her career on the concert platform, where she attained to the highest honours that English music had to offer, marked her as an artist of high rank. She was, I think, the first to introduce grand opera to the variety stage by appearing in the *Miserere* scene in *Il Trovatore* in the first days of the London Coliseum. She retired in her prime, I think on the occasion of her marriage.

The attention of collectors is called to the special "C.C." advertisement on the "Exchange and Mart" page, and they are invited and recommended to enquire into the advantages to themselves of using this scheme for disposing of their duplicates.

* "Duet, *William Tell*, by Caruso and Scotti" [sic]. There is no such record.

ROUND AND ABOUT WITH W. R. A.

IN connection with my first gaffe competition I mentioned the name of that writer of marvellous detective stories, Miss Dorothy Sayers, a keen music-lover, who in her *Nine Taylors* mystery brilliantly based part of her plot upon a strange element in music (I am obliged to be thus obscure, for the sake of those who may not have read the book, and don't want that richly anticipatable pleasure partly spoilt by knowing too much). I wonder, by the way, whether for the ingenious writer of detective stories there may be one or two other tips in musical curiosities? I have not thought much about them: but something might perhaps be made to turn on a particularly keen sense of pitch, or on the strange fact that some people can't tell the difference between a sung note of one pitch and a whistled one a fifth higher—they habitually whistle that way, when asked to copy a tune; or on the fact that some people (and animals) can hear high sounds that don't exist for others; or even on the old acoustical trick of causing a sound to break a glass. What about those walls of Jericho, trumpet-levelled? Are there other means of musical murder, besides loudspeakers and . . . ?—but I won't let out Miss Sayers's secret.

P.S.—I have just thought of a new way to commit murder by means of a gramophone. Price on application.

Fences Down

Among gaffes new to me are one or two which Sir Landon Ronald gave in the *News Chronicle*, and which I quote with acknowledgments. One, from a recent novel, is about Paderewski. First he plays "the Brahms Variations." This may pass: but there are several, and we may always be suspicious when a general title is used as if it were particular. Yet in one or two instances ("the *Largo*": "the *Prelude*") we need not suspect ignorance. But having taken this fence, our author (I am sorry to say it is our old friend the lady novelist once more) falls at the second, which, alas, consists of "the *Tristan Prelude*." I have heard some queer things in the Albert Hall (the queerest was the *Fire Music* from *The Valkyrie*, on the piano, by a pianist whose left hand, owing to the hall's funny acoustics, reached me well before the right), but I have never heard anyone tackle *Tristan* thus, and I hope I never shall.

Yet a third fence brings our author down, though the tumble is not a very bad one: "the noble beauty of Brahms' E flat major concerto, flawlessly played by Arthur Rubenstein." B flat, presumably. I am sure Mr. Rubinstein would play it flawlessly, but he would need both his "i"s.

Sir Landon's doctor friend who told him nobody could touch his conducting of "one of those wonderful Chopin symphonies" managed to hit upon one of the armour-plated impregnable, of which there are fewer than many might suppose. Even "one of the grand old Masses of Beethoven," though probably spoken equally rashly, cannot be declared absolutely unsound. Speaking of Chopin reminds me that a reader says he saw mentioned in one of our back numbers a record by Janotha (he thinks it was a cylinder), one of whose items was a Chopin fugue. I have never seen this. *Grove's* writer of the Chopin article, after listing the familiar works, says that "in addition a fugue and a nocturne have appeared, the musical value of which is nil." The novelist whose mention of the fugue I queried had said that it was played on the violin. I have heard a (two-part) fugue on the violin; it does not over-stimulate: the fugue and the fiddle were not born for each other.

Miniature Scores

A correspondent kindly mentions that the d'Indy *Mountain Song* symphony is miniaturized by Chester at 7s., and that

Schott's have a miniature score of the Hindemith second string Trio (reviewed in August 1934, page 92) at 3s.

Conversion!

One of the happiest of recent experiences was a reader's coming round from being very fierce with me to seeing what I am after. He had thought I was unfair to some conductor, and found that it was the music that mattered, after all. We all have our favourites among performers, but "the music's the thing." Strong attractions and repulsions are natural among enthusiasts. Some composers arouse them. Our job is to understand them as wholes. Then, criticism can be useful.

Quis Custodiet . . . ?

"Critical clashes" worry some people. Yet they are few, compared to the agreements. Clashes stand out, like murders. The newspapers do not fill their pages with reports of good deeds: the wicked ones are so much better copy! So with the occasional critical clashes. But what does one expect? Consider a law case: here are matters (one would think) mostly of fact, little of opinion; yet every year scores of cases are disputed from lower court to higher, and up to the Lords: and may in the end be decided by a majority of three against two: which is little satisfaction. What is the "truth" of each case? If increasingly eminent lawyers cannot get at the truth of solid, sober matters, why expect artistic people to agree better about works of art? They *do* agree, more often.

What, again, is the "truth" about a work? A hopeful perfectibularian once begged a critical colleague of mine to write just "simple impersonal truth" about every work. What a hope! The nearest to the truth is told by the score. Even there, the composer cannot set down all his desires, but if he writes *p*, and a conductor gives us *ppp*, we ought to smite that conductor. If the critic doesn't know the score, he is sadly hampered, though experience teaches him to deduce much; and ever the grand fortifying truth remains that "you don't need to eat the whole of a bad egg to know it's bad." Criticism in general to-day is far too kind to mediocrity. I love to remember the exhortation to his reviewers of a former Editor of the *Athenæum*: "Be just, be generous; but when you do meet with a deadly ass, string him up!"

Wanted—a Creed

I have often proposed that every critic should draw up his *(credo)*, which should be printed frequently over his page; or to alter it as he grows up, and explain why. (Even critics want to grow!) "If I were a dictator" that is what I should make all critics do. When you have followed a man for a few years, you can size him up—likes-and-dislikes and all (which, of course, have nothing to do with real criticism). Then, *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Who shall size up the sizers? I wish one could gather all one's readers together and have a grand talk-fest: it would do a power of good.

Probing for Values

Occasional kind correspondents mourn when their idols are smitten. Now and again the devil whispers to them "Dishonesty." I have moved among English critics of all kinds for a good many years, and whatever else they are, few are ever consciously dishonest. If you probe much into the foreign Press, you cannot say that of every country's critics, alas. There is such a thing as unconscious dishonesty (the mind is a strange thing), but that is difficult to hold an inquest upon. There is also personality-pushing, and that has to be allowed for. I hate it, and wonder if unsigned criticism would not be better. Yet it seems fairer that the critic should stand

squarely behind all he writes. The pushing of personalities is a curse. It's not "who say it" that matters: it's what is said. I sympathise with that other sort of perfectibilitarian who wants all personality and celebrity-mongering to be done away with; but I'm afraid it's too late. We live in a world of boosting, of false values. Celebrity concerts boost the performer above the music; but we have to work in the world as it is. All the more need, of course, for the solid folk to set a good example. All criticism is a process of making finer and finer distinctions: so is all education—all real living.

Words like "prejudice," "bias," "unfairness" need defining. We all grow up with inclinations towards one thing rather than another. Critics should be well read in modern psychology. But you cannot breed a race of critics who can write "simple, impersonal truth."

That would only bring in a new kind of snobbery. Besides, such writing would most likely be pale, lacking gusto. For the sake of gusto we must make allowances. But it does not excuse constant excesses.

Your Job and Mine

In this place I have to try to combine two functions, those of critic and companion. The January note was written in the first capacity. In the second, readers know that I welcome questions. I think we grow best by questioning. Nowadays many old bases of thought are questioned, not least in the critic's art. Mozart is looked upon very differently. "Sensitized plate" criticism ("My Soul and the music") gives place to real hard work at style-criticism. Pretty-pretty writing is wasteful: we want to get into the heart of things. Yet the readers of this journal are not presumed to be technicians. I gently suggest that they should not worry about other people's opinions, but seek to form their own, on experience, whatever training they can get (best of all, if it be in some form of practical music-making for themselves). Then critics' opinions will fall into place, and criticism be seen as a science of discovery, an art of expression (and maybe—heaven help the critic's human frailty!—occasionally an outlet for a bit of the old Adam).



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.]

Opera in England

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

On reading Mr. George H. S. Montagu's article in the January number of THE GRAMOPHONE, one gathers that he considers such singers as Mary Jarred, Evelyn Scotney, Alfred Piccaver and Joseph Hislop better than the principals of the 1934 Covent Garden season of Italian opera. Out of Mr. Montagu's selected principals for a National Opera Company, admittedly such artists as Florence Austral, Eva Turner, Maggie Teyte and John Brownlee compare favourably with those we heard at Covent Garden last year.

Mr. Montagu also complains of a dearth of first-class singers of Italian opera. Surely, in spite of his insular views, he has heard of Rethberg, Supervia, Spani, Jeritza, Del Monte, Pons, Galli-Curci, Ponselle, Giannini, Pampanini, Raisa, Cigna, Gigli, Lauri-Volpi, Schipa, Martinelli, Basiola, De Luca, Franci, Montesanto, Galeffi, Stracciari, Pertile, Granda, Zanelli and Pinsa, all fine artists who compare well with Mr. Montagu's list of legendary names.

Mr. Montagu is living, as are many people, under the erroneous impression that there is nothing comparable with the "good old days." It is not so! The post-war generation has equally good singers as had the pre-war generation, but it lacks the money to gather the pick of them all under one roof. They are scattered, and the opera-lovers must be content merely with the records of the minority of the living "galaxy of opera stars." There is so much controversy about the subject that detailed comparisons between past and present singers would be a welcome feature in the pages of THE GRAMOPHONE.

One must join with Mr. Montagu in his plea for more British operas, and it was very gratifying to read that Ethel Smyth's opera "The Bosun's Mate" was produced at Sadler's Wells last year. Would that Sir Thomas Beecham would produce Delius' "The Village Romeo and Juliet" as the novelty during the 1935 Covent Garden opera season.

Nottingham.

STANLEY R. BRAMLEY.

A Berlioz Society?

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

This letter is written in the hope that you will consent to use your influence to obtain some first-class recordings of the

works of Berlioz. I imagine that this can only be done by persuading the Gramophone Co. to run a "Berlioz Society," and feel sure that there would be a demand for such works as "Harold en Italie," the overtures "Roi Lear" and "Frances Juges," and several others if adequately recorded.

There is also a general feeling that the operas of Mozart are inadequately represented in the record catalogues, and I suggest that records might be made of "Don Giovanni," "Figaro," "Il Seraglio," "Idomeneo" and "The Magic Flute"; these could then be made available through a society, and would, I think, supply a long-felt need. Let me add a request that these operas should be recorded in complete form.

Finally, I should like to suggest that a new recording of the Brahms violin concerto is long overdue.

Cambridge.

G. N. SHARP.

Eileen Joyce

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

Referring to Mr. Williams's letter in the January issue headed "Eileen Joyce," may I be allowed to say that he has apparently little idea of the practical difficulties that exist as regards the matter he raises: what an artist shall or shall not record. The companies obviously cannot be expected to be entirely altruistic: they must put things on to the market that are likely to sell, and a series of master-works, recorded by a relatively unknown artist, might be the cause of congratulation to the recording company, from an artistic point of view, and equally a reflection on their business acumen, for there would certainly be a dead loss on such a choice.

The Parlophone Company produced records by Eileen Joyce of two works of Brahms in November. These are, in my opinion and that of critics in the Press all over the country, magnificent, and proof positive that there is no underground influence at work, insisting on her production of the merely dazzling. The question which no doubt will be exercising the minds of the directors will be, are they going to pay? That will find an answer soon, and if that answer is what Mr. Williams and I hope, there will surely be records forthcoming of other works of first-class importance coming out.

Eileen Joyce is the possessor of a first-class technique, something quite out of the ordinary—this quite apart from

her obvious artistic gifts, that have been acclaimed in her recent public performances, notably that at the last of the Beecham Sunday concerts, when she played the César Franck variations with the Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Williams may not have heard the story of her first record: how she went to the Parlophone Company, ostensibly to make a record at her own expense, but, of course, with the idea that the company might consider her performance so outstanding that they would give her a contract. This is exactly what happened, and for such a purpose it was obvious common sense to play her strong, and unique, suit—the technical facility, and so her choice was one of, what Mr. Williams calls, rather contemptuously, I think, “Victorian drawing-room show pieces”—in this case Liszt’s study in F minor. Had she elected to play, say, a Brahms intermezzo, or a Bach fugue, Mr. Williams would not have heard of her as a maker of records—of that I am perfectly sure.

Cumberland.

STANLEY HUGHES.

Reality and the Gramophone

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

I have read with interest the correspondence and articles in THE GRAMOPHONE during the past twelve months or so on the subject of the gramophone and reality in music, etc., but so far have not read anything which really gets to the root of the matter.

It would seem to me that the only absolute “reality” in the matter is the original inspiration of music in the composer’s mind—or rather in his “mind’s ear,” if one may coin the expression. It is clear, of course, that even this is not the fundamental reality, since the inspiration must itself have come from somewhere; but we cannot at the moment go further back than the composer’s apprehension of it, since it crosses the border of the realm of metaphysics.

Now this “reality” of the composer’s inspiration passes through several interpretations before the stage of the gramophone is reached. The first of these is the composer’s, when he puts his composition into black and white. This, being of necessity bound by fixed conventions, rules and limitations, falls in some degree short of the original. It can be kept from straying too far, however, by the composer’s directions and in his lifetime at least by his personal guidance; but it is nevertheless an interpretation and not the “reality.”

Then we get the second stage of interpretation when the composition is played. Apart from the limitations and imperfections of the instruments and of the human element controlling them, there remains the interpretation itself, which will differ with different individuals—even if all of the first rank. We may prefer the interpretation of one to that of another, even while admitting that all conform to the score and to such instructions as there may be. This interpretation must therefore, though it be impossible for us to say exactly how or where, differ in some degree from the “reality.”

Now comes the gramophone’s interpretation, which commences, in theory at any rate, where the previous one ends. If the gramophone’s version differs from that of the instruments it will be in the degree of its faithfulness of reproduction of instrument tone or volume, or the relative qualities of more than one instrument, etc., but we can assume other faults to be absent. Since the instrument’s interpretation is not the reality, there is no reason why the gramophone’s differences should of necessity carry its version away from the reality—it might conceivably bring it nearer. That the volume is less cannot be a fault, since, were the composer’s inspiration to be at full-orchestra volume in his “mind’s ear,” he would be mentally deafened.

Concerning “perspective,” the existence of this in an orchestra is surely a fault when compared with the “reality,” in which it cannot have existed. If the reproducing machine could produce the composition with the correct tones of

individual instruments, and with rigid adherence to the score, but without the need of the intermediary orchestra or performer, there is no reason why the result should not be as near the “reality” as the orchestra’s version. It would even be rash to-day to say that this can never be achieved.

The question of the relative approximation of various interpretations to the “reality” is not the main point of this letter, however, but rather the fact that the “reality” is not to be found later in the process than the composer’s original inspiration. It might be said that the composer, in his conception of the music, embodies the qualities which will be given to it by the performers; but, if so, this is already a departure from the “reality” and a concession to the intended imperfect means of reproduction.

There must be many to whom musical inspiration comes who are unable to interpret the “reality” for others. Either they cannot write it down, or it cannot be performed by existing means; but that they can hear the “reality” themselves there can be no doubt. It is this which is the only “reality” in the whole process, not any one of the subsequent interpretations of it.

Cyprus.

N. F. WHEELER.

The National Anthem

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

May I ask through your columns whether in this year of His Majesty’s Jubilee it would not be possible to introduce some better renderings of the National Anthem in cinemas, theatres, etc., than the perfunctory performances to which we have been accustomed. If we could have good vocal gramophone records by leading singers and choirs the rendering of the Anthem could be made a musically attractive part of the programme and might thus meet with a more attentive reception than is sometimes given. Again, we hear with regret of the old Welsh and Gaelic tongues dying out. By making vocal gramophone records in these languages the conventional medium for rendering the Anthem in Wales and the Highlands, we might hope that instead of merely surviving among a dwindling few, a knowledge of them might be kept alive among the general population at least to the extent of the National Anthem.

Notts.

E. ROWAN.

More Lieder from Mme. Gerhardt?

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

In reference to the letter of Mr. D. Shawe-Taylor, I should like to echo very emphatically his demands for further *lieder* from Mme. Gerhardt.

As he says, the Gramophone Combine is allowing “inimitable interpretations” to pass unrecorded; one of the most glaring instances being the continued absence from the lists of Mme. Rethberg, whose voice—called “the loveliest in the world” by Toscanini (who should know!)—is now more exquisitely magnificent than ever. (As visitors to Covent Garden last June can testify.)

Cheshire.

C. FORTH.

The Neo-Bechstein

To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.

The recorders seem to think that the one record of this instrument is more than enough, and the B.B.C. hasn’t even got that far!

I have been looking over some of the 1933 issues of THE GRAMOPHONE, seeing things I missed at the time, for I was too busy sorting out and burning superfluous reading matter of some 27 years’ accumulation, preparatory to a change of abode, in that summer, to read my new books at all closely. I suppose I should not be surprised at anything in the way of misstatement in a record list, but I cannot think how ever

one of these dilettante blurbists* could say that, in the Neo-Bechstein, "hammers are dispensed with, and the sound, produced by electro magnets operating on the strings . . ." Our old friend "Adam Black" repeated this, in a letter to THE GRAMOPHONE later; one would expect it of *him*, for he is most consistent in getting hold of the wrong end of the stick: what I cannot understand is that editors (not only you) let him say these things in print. I cannot recollect seeing a correction of this absurd fable. The Neo, of course, has a normal piano action, modified to suit the lighter blows required; actually it has twice as many hammers as an ordinary piano, the ordinary ones being retained to give a piano touch, and in their turn striking lighter, secondary hammers which produce the sound. *Anyone* could have known this without ever having seen or heard the instrument, as there were numerous descriptions published long enough before the record was made.

Being in London last August (I had not been there for eighteen years!), I called at Bechstein's to see and hear the Neo for myself. The demonstrator did not ask me what he should play, but started straight away on Bach, and I was struck at once with the way the instrument suited the music: this might have been written for the piano part or the whole of the amplified power of the Neo, rather than for clavichord or harpsichord. So, too, it carries Handel's keyboard music better than any harpsichord or piano.

In this year of Bach-Handel celebration, both recording companies and the B.B.C. would do well to make considerable use of this instrument, which adds new resources without taking away any of the advantages of a very beautiful piano-forte.

Plympton.

L. J. VOSS.

Dulwich and Forest Hill Gramophone Society

The programme at the second January meeting (25th) was given by Mr. R. Garrett, and was entitled "The Supernatural in Music."

The selected items showed how different composers endeavoured to convey magical, supernatural and spiritual feelings in music, and opened with the "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture, fairies being the nicest supernatural beings to meet, as Mr. Garrett remarked.

This was followed by two different settings to Goethe's "Erl King"—the well-known one by Schubert, sung by Peter Dawson, and the other by Loewe, sung by Sir George Henschel, and the latter reverses the usual treatment, giving the son the more robust voice and making the father's appear that of an old man, low and quavering.

A pleasing fairy-like trifle was the "Song of the Elf," sung by Evelyn Scotney (Hugo Wolf); in contrast was Chaliapine in "The Wraith" (Schubert) and a scene from "Boris Godounov," in which an atmosphere of fear of the uncanny was well conveyed.

"Swan of Tuonela" (Sibelius) also maintains a weird atmosphere throughout, as befitting the ancient Scandinavian conception of Hell as being in frozen regions, guarded by an immense black swan! (Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra).

Opinions were, however, divided as to whether Wagner succeeded in conveying the correct atmosphere in his overture to "The Flying Dutchman," and in the Transformation scene from "Parsifal."

Mr. Garrett was warmly thanked for an interesting evening.

New issues were heard at the first February meeting (8th), as at the first meeting every month. Intending new members and visitors are cordially invited to come along on these evenings to hear "1935 recording quality" on a perfect acoustic machine (Mark 10a).

March meetings, 8th (new issues) and 22nd. Meetings are held on alternate Fridays at the Kirkdale Café, Sydenham, S.E.26.

Particulars from Hon. Sec., Mr. F. T. Dixon, 48, Chartham Road, South Norwood, S.E.25.

A. A. PURR.

Sutton Gramophone Circle

Readers who have read reports of the meetings of the Sutton and District Music Circle may have wondered whether the reports should have appeared under the heading of "Gramophone Societies." At the annual general meeting of the Circle, held on November 5th, it was proposed that the title should be amended to show more clearly the Circle's aims and the nature of its activities.

It was suggested that the original title, besides being rather cumbersome in its length, might give newcomers a rather mistaken idea of the method of approach adopted by the Society to music. Actually the meetings have been of a very informal nature, one of the members usually being called upon to prepare a programme of gramophone records. Occasionally there have been visits from well-known lecturers.

It was unanimously agreed that the Circle should be known in future as the Sutton Gramophone Circle. We hope that this classification may induce any residents in the district who may have been hesitant about joining to approach the secretary, Mr. W. H. Clark, at 10, Browning Avenue, Sutton, without further delay.

South-East London Recorded Music Society

On January 14th the Society had a welcome visit from its patron, Mr. Walter Yeomans, who ably demonstrated the new Decca Portrola (portable) radio-gramophone.

Mr. Yeomans' demonstration included both the wireless and reproducing qualities of this excellent little instrument. The former included a programme from Radio-Paris, the latter a series of records ranging from Prokofiev's ballet suite "Chout" to "Pop goes the Weazel."

On February 11th the Society had its premier visit from Mr. Richard Holt. His scrupulously well prepared paper on Rachmaninoff—particularly this performer-composer's relationship to the fundamentals of Russian temperament and national characteristics—was enthusiastically received. Unfortunately, time allowed only for a hearing of excerpts from the second and third piano concertos. It is hoped that arrangements for a welcome return visit by this gentleman will be made in due course.

The Society's next meeting will be on March 11th, at 8 p.m., in the clubroom at Sander's Restaurant, 199, High Street, Lewisham, S.E., when our President, Mr. V. Webling, will discuss "Records from the Past." Visitors and enthusiasts are always welcome. Enquiries and communications to: Hon. Secretary, Mr. R. J. Skan, 70, Chudleigh Road, S.E.4.

Richmond and District Radio-Gramophone Society

The above Society met on Monday, February 4th, when a varied programme of orchestral, vocal and humorous numbers was provided from the February issues.

The recital included Schubert's "Ave Maria" sung by Elisabeth Schumann, the Overture to Fidelio (Beethoven), The Corsair Overture (Berlioz), the last movement of Mozart's Concerto in B flat major for piano and orchestra played by Artur Schnabel and the London Symphony Orchestra, the "Yeomen of the Guards" selection by Debroy Somers' Band, "Castles in the Air" sung by Derek Oldham, and a selection of "Everybody's Song Tunes" by the London Palladium Orchestra.

W. E. CROOK, Hon. Sec.

*THE GRAMOPHONE, June 1933, H.M.V. advt., p. ix.

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