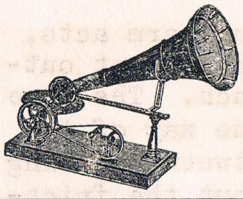

The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

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The Editor,

Your correspondent "Fredison" is quite correct in his contention that the Berliner is not a suitable mascot for a Phonograph Society and I for one am in favour of something more suitable, say Edison's "Tin-foil" or his "Opera" a phonograph sans pareil. "Fredison's" alternative suggestion - that the Society becomes "The Vintage Phonograph and Gramophone Society of New Zealand" has some merit but the disadvantage of all embracing names is that they can become too unwieldy for everyday use. For example we could find ourselves with the title "The Vintage Phonograph, Gramophone, Polyphon, Musical Box and Barrel Organ Society of New Zealand (Inc.)."

A.J. Robb

THE MELODIA MOTOR CONTROL

David Longbottom

"To Start. Place sound-box in playing position.
To Stop. Replace sound-box in rest position."

These are the simple instructions on the use of the cable operated stop-start mechanism on a Melodia Gramophone in my possession.

The steel cable is attached to a small stud in the end cover of the "U" tube leading from the sound-box or pickup. The "U" tube is hinged at this end to a swivelling "L" shaped tube which leads down to the horn within the cabinet. The cable is led down this "L" tube after which it runs inside a flexible cable (similar to a bicycle brake cable) leading out, through a small hole in the horn, to the motor.

When the sound box is in the playing position the stud is nearest to the opening into the "L" tube but when placed in the rest position the "U" tube is turned through a half circle and the stud is furthest away, and so the wire is pulled.

The disc, on which the oiled pad of the governor arm acts, has a spring steel ring around it, one end of which is bent outwards so that it protrudes about a quarter of an inch. The wire movement caused by the sound box pulls a stop in the way of the revolving end of the ring. The slight slippage between the ring and the disc avoids a sudden locking of the motor but the friction between them is sufficient to bring the motor quickly to a stop.

When the sound box is in the playing position the wire is slackened and a return spring on the stop pulls it away from the ring and the motor is free to start turning again.

MUSICAL BOXES

HINTS FOR THE NEW COLLECTOR

W.T. Norris

Most interested phonograph collectors from time to time come across the occasional musical box and are at a loss to know the value, the rarity, the age of the instrument and the approximate cost of any repairs which may be needed.

Musical boxes can be divided into three main classes:-

a. Cylinder against metal comb.
b. Disc on steel wheel against comb.
c. Boxes that require wind to operate reeds or pipes through the medium of paper rolls, cardboard or metal and wooden pegs on a cylinder.

Pinned Cylinder Type

These instruments come in various sizes and shapes, from some which play only one tune to the ones which play ten tunes and the even larger ones which have an interchangeable cylinder and play six tunes per cylinder. The single and two tune movements are often found in clocks, photograph albums, jugs, snuff boxes etc. The age of these is often difficult to determine as they have been constructed over a long period, and if the movement is out of order are not of great value. The simplest solution to this difficulty is to replace the whole movement with a new one as these can be obtained.

Next come the larger musical boxes of the pin type; these are often found in very poor order, the comb having many teeth missing and most of the pins either broken off or bent over on the cylinder. This has been caused by the spring breaking or the governor giving way and the cylinder unleashed, the result

being that it revolves at high speed shearing off some of the teeth on the comb and bending the pins on the cylinder.

A machine in this condition is hardly worth purchasing as the cost of repairing the cylinder would be about £10 and the work would have to be done in Switzerland.

If teeth are missing off the comb, these can be replaced but at a cost of about £1 per tooth. The governor can be repaired in New Zealand but even in this country the cost may be high and could be from £4 to £10 depending on how many gears are required.

Always play the box through listening with a critical ear. If the sound is full of base tones it could mean that the lead strips under the base teeth have become corroded. If this is severe or if the strips are missing altogether, it will be a big job as replacement is difficult. If the dampers, which are the hair-like rods just under the teeth of the comb, are missing or awry the box will give a squeaky sound. This is perhaps one of the easiest of all repairs to carry out.

I hope these notes will be of assistance to the beginner and will steer him safely through some of the pitfalls of collecting Musical Boxes.

TALKING OF CYLINDERS

In this series of articles it is intended to present a few ramblings over the vast fields of cylinder makes, recording artistes or anything at all connected with cylinders. Members having anything to add to the topics discussed are invited to send their contributions to the Editor. Noms de plume may be used if desired.

No. 1 HECTOR GRANT "A.J.R."

The other day I came across a four-minute wax Edison cylinder by Hector Grant, a Scottish comedian. I wonder how many people who have played Hector Grant's records know who he really was.

His real name was Peter Dawson. Yes he was THE Peter Dawson, the famous concert singer.

One day in 1906, when Dawson was at the Gramophone Company's Studios, he imitated Harry Lauder for the amusement of those in the studio. He was overheard by the chief of the Gramophone Company, Fred Gaisberg, who thought Dawson should make a few recordings of Harry Lauder songs which were very popular at that time. To avoid ruining his career as a serious singer he chose the pseudonym, "Hector Grant". Dawson also appeared on the Music

Halls as Grant, suitably made up and wearing a kilt. He even did a tour with a concert party, in which he appeared in the first half as Peter Dawson and in the second half as Hector Grant. Although Peter Dawson was born in Australia, his parents were Scottish and it is to this that he attributed his success as Hector Grant. In his autobiography "Fifty Years of Song" he tells how even the famous Sir Harry Lauder could not believe that Dawson and Grant were the same man, even though Lauder had seen Hector Grant perform.

Hector Grant was not the only pseudonym used by Peter Dawson on his records - he was also known as Will Strong and Frank Danby. He was also an accomplished song-writer, for which he used the names Peter Allison, Evelyn Bird, Geoffrey Baxter, Arnold Flint, Hector Grant, Allison Miller, Gilbert Mainday, J.P. McCall, Denton Toms and Charles Webber.

TALKING MACHINE NEEDLES

C.E. Woledge

One of the chief accessories of the disc talking machine or "Gramophone" as it was originally named, is the needle; the first link in the chain between the record and the human ear. To enumerate all the gadgets made and experiments carried out with needles in attempts to improve reproduction would require a fair sized volume so here I will merely detail those efforts with which I have come in contact. About 1904-1906 Gramophone needles were manufactured in their thousands of millions and sold in tins containing 100. Redditch in England was the centre of the sewing needle and fish-hook industry and took up the Gramophone needle manufacture when the demand for such was evident. Sheffield also took up the line which eventually became its most prosperous department. In the beginning, with the introduction of the Berliner Gramophone in 1893, one needle only was supplied with each machine and one owner is said to have used the same needle for three years sharpening it occasionally on emery cloth. When it defied further sharpening he took to sewing needles but no mention is made of the state of the records! It was not long however before needles were obtainable in unlimited quantities and apart from the recognised makers most of the large Gramophone concerns made their own under their registered brands. Naturally most of the makers claimed their products to be the best and their methods and materials to be superior. Apparently in three items only did the Gramophone makers agree:- viz. 1. the speed of the turntable should be about 78 revolutions per minute. 2. the size of the reproducer diagram should be not more than 2 inches in diameter and usually about 1½" and 3. the needle should not be longer than ¾ of an inch. There the agreements seemed to end and all other items in the industry were in a state of keen competition each striving for mastery.

(To be continued)

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