



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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and Pamela G. Rogers

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP. Our membership now stands at seventy. We would like to advise all members that the Society now offers many services to you, details of which we shall list in the next issue. In the meantime, we remind you that Society badges are available at \$1.00 N.Z.

CAN YOU HELP? English member, Major H.H. Annand is at present listing the titles of The Indestructible Cylinders issued in Albany, New York and London. He has so far been unable to trace details of three of the British 4-minute cylinder numbers, viz. 7082, 7084 and 7091. If any one can assist, please contact the secretary.

WANTED TO SELL. Edison Diamond Discs by Hempel, Bonci, Mojica, Muzio, etc. Contact the Secretary.

THAT WAS THE MONTH THAT WAS by Anon. The main point discussed at the April meeting was the club display, to be held on June 1st. As well as sorting out who would bring what, the admission prices to the public were fixed and it was decided to approach various firms in Christchurch to put on window displays to attract interest. After business, pleasure. Several records brought by members were played, and Joffre Marshall gave a fascinating demonstration on how to produce small screws and parts on a lathe, especially valuable to those with incomplete machines! And a special thank-you to Mr. George Foster, who presented an interesting and erudite review of the book Collecting Musical Boxes and How to Repair Them by Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume.

THE ZORA by Walter Norris

This is a reproducer depicted in the 1908-9 Klingsor Catalogue; it was claimed it would fit all machines and was a great success. The advantages claimed for the Zora were loud and clear reproduction and that it could be used on any existing disc machine and for any record played either by needle or sapphire without changing the sound box. This brings to mind the Brunswick Single Ultona. The Instructions for Use were:-

For playing needle records, place needle in holder A and tighten screw V. For sapphire discs, merely omit the needle. The price quoted for the complete sound box was 15/6 nett with an extra 1/- for one to fit Pathe machines. To our knowledge, these have not been seen in New Zealand. This was the invention of a Dr. V. Bontschev.

AND ANOTHER UNUSUAL REPRODUCER

Through the kindness of Mr. Woledge, we have been able to bring you information taken from his scrap books. This month we print a photograph of an unusual reproducer. The principle appears to be that the strings hold the arm against pivots and also against the diaphragm. It seems to me that the best that this can do is to give the arm more freedom of movement and thus give more sound or better quality. Whatever the result it does not appear to have been a great success as we would have seen more machines with this reproducer. The manufacturer's address was 18 Rue Grange Bateliere, Paris and the firm also produced a gramophone called a "Charmophone". I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has seen or heard of a reproducer of this type.

One of our members, Ernest Hunt of Featherston can look back further than most of us, through a life interwoven with "Edison" memories. We asked him if he would put some of these memories into writing for us.

MY EARLIEST EDISON MEMORIES by Ernest G. Hunt

The scene is the Hampden Street School, Nelson in about 1898 - One fine afternoon about two o'clock there was a knock on the door; there stood a gentleman traveller with two carrying cases. These were brought in and placed on a table which was covered with a red cloth. Out of the cases came several mysterious objects. Firstly there was one which had as part of it, a small round silver barrel and was sitting on an oak box which had a winding handle sticking out of the side. A metal support stood on the floor and hooked to this was a large brass funnel. When all was ready, the traveller took something from a box, put it on the shining barrel and set the machine in motion. Lo and behold - music issued forth - a band march (which I found out afterwards was "Under The Double Eagle" played by Gilmers Band). Then another record, as the man called it, was put on and a man sang to us. We were excited and amazed - these were the very first phonograph records we had ever heard. I made up my mind then and there that I would like to own such a talking machine one day. The time was to come when I not only owned a phonograph but went to work for Thomas Alva Edison, the man who invented it. All this happened a long time ago, early in my life, but my interest in the Edison phonograph has never lessened. Even today, I am still experimenting with my instrument and enjoying my association with my fellow members of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand.

TALKING MACHINE MEMORIES

Recording Artists Who Have Visited New Zealand by C.E. Woledge

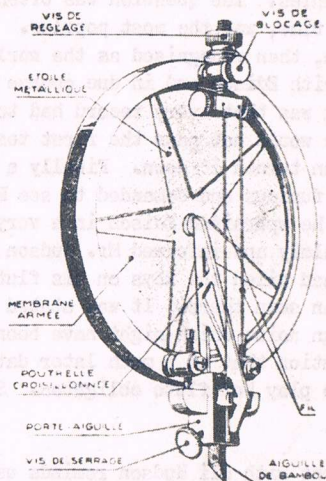
MUSIC AND THE STAGE IN NEW ZEALAND - A Century of Entertainment in New Zealand. This is the title of an illustrated book published by Charles Begg & Co. Ltd. in 1944. Written by Maurice Hurst, it lists over two hundred names of celebrated entertainers who have visited New Zealand since the arrival of the first outstanding performer, William Hoskins, in 1847. Anticipating that phonograph enthusiasts may be interested to know a little more of artists who have made records and also visited this country I have selected from the list those of outstanding merit; entertainers whose recordings may be in the library of many collectors. Of course, some artists who made records are likely to be omitted for the reason that their recordings were never listed or offered for sale in New Zealand. Before the turn of this century, although there had been a continual stream of celebrity performers here, there were only a few who had done any recording owing to the comparative newness of the talking machine; it was virtually untried.

NELLIE MELBA AND ELI HUDSON

Of the thousands of recording artists, relatively few have come to this country and been heard in person. Among the greatest who have done so would be Melba, Nordica and Kubelik, Lauder, Dawson and others of a slightly lesser calibre. Connected with these well-known celebrities there is

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THE CHARMOPHONE REPRODUCER



PHONOGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

THE COVER OF —
"A PORTFOLIO OF PHONOGRAPHS"

OF AN EARLY TALKING MACHINE SHOP

usually some incident which is worth relating. In the case of Melba, it was often asked why she recorded for one company only; this was before the custom of entering into sole contracts with recording companies. The question was often asked why did she not sing for the Edison Phonograph which, at that time, was the most popular. The reason given was that Melba on her travels always took Eli Hudson, then recognised as the world's greatest flautist, with her. A recording test had been arranged with Edison and in due course the first trial took place in the Edison Studio. Edison's ruling was that every record had to be to his personal satisfaction before it was pressed; in this case he would not pass the first test record and suggested another trial. This was given but again Edison turned it down. Finally a third recording was made but did not fare any better. Eli Hudson was furious and demanded to see Edison; it was the first time his performance had been questioned and he upbraided Edison in a very forceful manner. Edison is said to have treated the matter quite calmly and informed Mr. Hudson that he would be pleased to record his performance but only after he had oiled the keys on his flute. Melba and her flautist then left the studio and were never again seen there. It was stated in one of the trade papers that the recording did reveal a foreign noise which might have been a squeaky key in the flute. Incidentally it may be of interest to mention that at a much later date Melba employed the late Ernest Jamieson of Christchurch to play her flute obligatos. She even had him on the stage with her during her performance.

This incident with Eli Hudson reminds us that Edison was partly deaf and the reason for this condition was because of his being struck on the side of the head by the train guard when "young Tom" was a newsboy on the train. Despite this handicap, Edison never complained of it and even stated that he was pleased with the condition and would not care to change it. He considered that it enabled him to better concentrate on his problems. On one occasion a number of his admirers decided to favour him by engaging the recognised greatest ear specialist in America to treat him in an attempt to restore his hearing. A meeting was arranged and the specialist explained his methods. Edison paid great attention and agreed with what he had heard but stated he was frightened. The specialist said there was nothing to be afraid of and that no pain or unpleasantness was involved. "Oh, I'm not afraid of that" said Edison, "I'm afraid that you might succeed and restore my hearing." For a long time it was a mystery how Edison was able to detect sound and defects in recorded music which those with normal hearing could not hear. Finally the mystery was solved - when it was revealed that Edison received vibrations through his teeth, by biting the edge of the cabinet.

SATURDAY JUNE 1ST. This date has loomed large in the minds of Christchurch members for some weeks as it was the day on which the 1968 Public Display was to be held.

The day was fine and members spent the morning setting up the display and giving information to a reporter and a photographer who, despite the fact that we had had a photograph of Bill Dini and an interview with him in both papers during the previous week were prepared to give us further publicity.

Eighty-seven gramophones, phonographs and musical boxes were arranged on trestles in the very suitable St. Johns Anglican Church Hall. This hall which has alcoves down one side made it very easy to arrange the machines in groups. To supplement the display, we had horns, records, needle containers, record catalogues, etc. During the day, the exhibits were inspected by well over three hundred people and their comments were most complimentary. It was obvious that the publicity drew the attention of the public to the existence of the Society and to the fact that it is an "alive" one.

Facts and figures - financially the result was a modest profit; we gained three new members on the day and had enquiries from several other interested people.

BOOK REVIEW - COLLECTING MUSICAL BOXES AND HOW TO REPAIR THEM

by Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume reviewed by George Foster

I think, without doubt, that this is the best book on musical boxes to be produced in England. Mr. Ord-Hume is editor of The Music Box a quarterly bulletin issued by the Music Box Society of Great Britain and this book is virtually a precis, properly arranged and edited, of the four years of the Society's transactions. A list of the main chapters will indicate the scope of the book and these are very fully written up. The chapter on Organettes and other mechanical musical instruments other than musical boxes is necessarily brief as this subject in itself would command a book as large as the whole volume, but none the less a tremendous amount of material is crammed into the chapter. The list of makers and maker's marks is probably greater than that in any other book extant.

It is usual for any reviewer to pick out any inconsistencies that he sees in the book but in doing this, the present reviewer does not wish to detract from what is an admirable book and what will become in future years, the music box collector's bible.

Firstly, then, I felt that the historical precis, whilst being a very difficult one to write, plugged for Antoine Favre as being the probable inventor of the music box. I am not aware on what grounds the late R.G. Baillie in his Watchmakers and Clockmakers based his statement but he hands the palm to Philip Samuel Meylan as being the first to fit a musical box to a watch. Baillie, in my experience is a man motivated only by facts - his notes on this matter may throw some more light on what has turned out to be a very obscure problem.

I personally felt that the chapter on what to look for in buying a musical box was rather optimistic in the statement that any box with up to twelve broken blades could be regarded as repairable. I feel that this is too much for any ordinary collector and that four would be nearer the mark and even this number without the scale could have its problems. Again in a technical repair, the tyro is lead to believe that he can replace the barrel cap in any position. I feel that this is definitely wrong - only one place for this cap - exactly the position from whence it was first removed. A pop mark is usually there to indicate the oil opening. If it isn't, then make one before removing the cap. To do otherwise could throw the arbor out of truth. I feel also that Mr. Ord-Hume has skated blissfully over the most difficult part for a tyro; the removal and replacement of the mainspring. In small boxes perhaps not so important but in large boxes and in particular the penny in slot 22" to 30" disc machines, a definite plan and previously prepared equipment to protect the tyro from injury is a must before unloosing the monster. In the list of names, the German clockmaking firm is listed as "Unghans". It should be under 'J' as the word is "Junghans". In conclusion the book is a pleasure to read, packed with data and well worth a place in any music box collector's library.

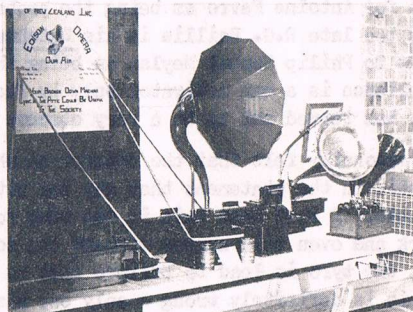
A PORTFOLIO OF EARLY PHONOGRAPHS

by Lawrence A. Schlick - Reviewed by Walter Norris

It is with pleasure that I review this new book by a friend who is also a member of our Society. Quite some time ago, Larry informed me of his intention to produce a book to be, as he put it, 'a help to all collectors.' It would, he claimed help the collector identify which model machine he had discovered and whether it was complete with the correct horn and reproducer. The book has, in the front, five pages of information as to how the book came to be produced, who helped with the research, etc. and also details of horns and reproducers. These are followed by fifty pages of very clear 9" x 14" illustrations of both cylinder and disc machines with perhaps a predominance of cylinder machines. Quite a number of the photographs have a small inset depicting the correct reproducer and each has a simple concise description of the machine pictured. The book is bound by



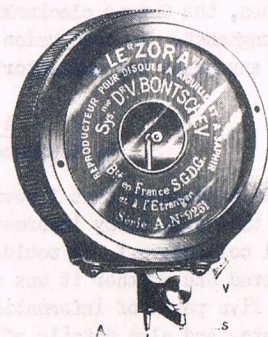
THE INVENTION — AND THE INVENTOR



AT THE DISPLAY — JUNE 1ST



OPERA DISC LABEL



ZORA REPRODUCER

a single spiral wire which enables the reader to study the photographs with ease. The paper used throughout is a high quality gloss. I feel this will be a must for machine collectors. The price is U.S. \$5.50 and the book is obtainable from Lawrence A. Schlick, 1728 South Shore Drive, Worthington, Minnesota, U.S.A. 56187.

THE OPERA DISC LABEL by W. Keessen

In 1918 the alliance between the Gramophone Company (H.M.V.) and her German off-shoot, the Deutsche Grammophon Aktiengesellschaft, was broken off. This last firm, now known as the Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft, was faced with several difficulties. In the first place there was the problem of getting foreign currency necessary for the purchase of shellac. Then there was trouble with the issue of the repertoire; an important part of that belonged to the Gramophone Company - this concerned the countries outside of Germany. In 1920/1921 the D.G.A. therefore tried to conquer a part of the U.S.A. market. They issued the label 'Opera Disc' (pictured in this issue). If this firm had restricted itself to its own recordings, no objections would have been made. However on this label appeared also, recordings (especially by Caruso) of which the Victor Talking Machine Co. and the Gramophone Company possessed the rights. An end was soon brought to this particular competition; rights to the selections, recorded by the D.G.A. itself were assigned to Vocalion in 1924 and afterwards to Brunswick.

THE SOUND OF SUCCESS by James Heath

Many collectors are perfectly happy to play their 78's on an acoustic gramophone. However, some perfectionists, fusspots and plain trouble-makers - like myself - insist on trying to play their records electrically. In even permitting this rash desire to raise its ugly head you are letting yourself in for a lot of hair-tearing. Good results are difficult to obtain and often impossible; maybe the ideal solution is to give away your records and replace them with the re-issues on L.P., assuming they are available; or take up stamp collecting; or something....., but the books on yoga agree that positive thought is the idea to follow, so for those determined types I will try to be practical.

First let us weigh pro against con. Take the ordinary acoustic gram: - Its advantage is its comparative simplicity. Simple to use, simple to service, and its usually solidly built. It is, or rather eventually will become, an antique, or even that rare bird, spoken of in hushed tones, a collectors item!! But its very simplicity is also against it. The music is exactly as the record. If it is scratchy, so is the reproduction. If it is boomy or blasting, so is the reproduction. You have no control, other than by stuffing something in the horn, or fitting a mute to the reproducer. This is partly why there are so many sorts of gram to collect. They excel at playing different sorts of music (to be truthful, a few are a failure at all music, but let it pass) and different musical ears prefer different musical colouration.

The other fault is the wear on the record. Some are of course worse than others. Occasionally a fiendish designer seems to have taken a delight in constructing a vicious monster capable of ruining any record in one playing. He was aided by the steel needle. Given enough playing-weight this will penetrate anything. Have you ever noticed some records are so worn at the beginning that the music is inaudible? This is accomplished by a nice sharp steel needle, before it has worn sufficiently to fit the groove and thus distribute the weight of the reproducer over a large enough area to reduce the cutting action. Fibre needles are much better but they're so quiet. Distractingly so and they are maddeningly liable to lose their point and skate merrily o'er hill and dale and fetch up on the label. Its a hard life! And now to shoot holes in the electric gram:- You can make the music far 'hier-fi' and less scratchy and eliminate much distortion by filtering. You can stress a particular voice or instrument and make it more prominent. You can add artificial echo to make it sound lively. You can let your imagination run riot and produce something

unrecognisable, like turning a baritone into a soprano. You can make audible or intelligible, something that comes over as a confused chatter or indistinct murmur on an acoustic gram, but again it is easy to produce a monster. Unless they are being used by someone who knows what they do and what they are for, all the electric controls and modifying elements are just a menace. There is also the fabulous cost and complexity a system can assume if its owner desires some abstruse refinement. And then there is something that is sure to start an argument and which I think is the key to the decision. Many collectors, myself included, feel that something is always lacking when music is reproduced electrically. Much as I prefer to listen to modern stereo sound, played on elaborate hi-fi equipment, something indefinable, some tiny touch of vitality is missing, which comes over on some records on some acoustic reproducers. If you feel that this spark of life is more important than the undeniably more listenable, smoother, better quality sound of a good electric gram, keep your acoustic model. It is a personal choice and depends on your ears.

(To be continued)

THE FIRST STEREOGRAM? by James Heath

In 1898 the American Columbia Co. placed before the startled acclaim of the world 'THE MULTIPLEX GRAPHOPHONE GRAND'. This indescribable contraption used a 5 inch cylinder inscribed with three separate grooves, playing them through three separate reproducers on a common carriage. Finally a separate 56 inch horn for each reproducer. Their claim for increased volume must surely have been fulfilled! According to their adverts, it was designed especially for the Paris Exposition and was not listed in any catalogue or carried in stock, but built to order. It seems that no-one did and the first was also the last. After the display this machine found its way to a palace belonging to the Shah of Persia. Perhaps the price deterred buyers, for

	The Multiplex Graphophone Grand,
including :-	3 Recording Heads,
	3 Reproducing Heads,
	3 56 inch Horns,
	1 Special Horn Stand,
	12 Multiplex Graphophone Records,
and,	6 Multiplex Graphophone Blanks -

Cost One Thousand Dollars

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:-

Dear Sir,

On passing St. Johns Church Hall on June 1st, I was alarmed to see a sign conspicuously posted near the entrance which read 'Danger Drive Carefully!' Being an obedient person I did drive carefully, but being also of an enquiring mind, I began speculating as to the nature of the danger - may be a lion had escaped? But no - the Cat Show was several miles away, and there were no tea packets to indicate that anyone had turned a tiger loose. Then, as in my boyhood days when I had been mending a puncture, the solution hit me in the eye. Inside that Hall were more than fifty-seven phonographs and gramophones - imagine the danger those fantastic machines represented! You may scoff but the legal profession has long recognised how carefully the public must be protected against such machines and I can but quote from a lease to illustrate my point:- "The Lessee shall not at any time without the consent of the Lessor in writing first had and obtained, exhibit or permit or allow to be used or exhibited on the demised premises and cinematograph phonograph or gramophone or other instrument of the kind or any musical instrument of any kind whatsoever."

This being the case I must ask for an assurance that adequate steps will be taken to protect the public at any other Exhibition you stage.

As always I remain, Your obedient servant,
Fredison