



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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS. We would remind our Overseas members that the Subscription of \$2 N.Z. is now due. As accounts cannot be sent overseas by second class mail, we are taking the easy way out by making this an official reminder. Quite a number of our more recent members have had their initial subscription dated from 1968, so the above will not apply.

AND TO NEW ZEALAND MEMBERS. At the time of writing this, some subscriptions are still unpaid. Please note that no further issues of The Phonographic Record will be posted until your subscription is received and we cannot guarantee to hold back copies of the magazine.

AN APOLOGY FROM THE SECRETARY. In an age when we seem to be just a number, or a statistic it is very easy to fall into this way of life so that you become 'just another member.' Rest assure that you are not - you are recognised as a person and many of you write to me in this way; this I very much appreciate. But one thing that has not been achieved even in this computer age is the adding of more hours to the day. I keep running out of time, long before I have acknowledged your letters as promptly as I should like to - please accept this as an apology for past or future.

ACROSS THE TASMAN. We would like to introduce you to the Australian Branch of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society. Colin Gracie, the Secretary is happy to welcome new members. The Branch issues its own magazine and we are sure Colin will send a sample copy to anyone interested. The annual subscription is Aus. \$2.50 and we would ask intending members to write direct to:-

Colin Gracie,
Post Office,
Cavendish, Victoria,
3408, AUSTRALIA.

DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS. In the report of the Society's Annual General Meeting, you will see mention of the decision to issue a Directory of Members. To do this properly, we shall require your co-operation. The Executive will be meeting shortly to finalise the form of the questionnaire to be circulated. Emphasis will be placed on the services members are able to offer to others and their wants. We are hoping that through the information listed, collectors of like interest can get together. When the questionnaire arrives, please give it urgent attention. This will be much appreciated.

THE THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Third Annual General Meeting was held on Monday, 23rd September 1968 at 8 p.m. in the Red Room, St. Johns Anglican Church Hall.

Mr. Dini presided over an attendance of twenty-one members. After welcoming those present, to the Meeting he then elaborated on his report which had already been circulated. There was brief discussion on the Annual Accounts which showed an excess of income over expenditure of (unaudited), of \$151.37.

As no nominations were received for the position of any of the Society's Officers, the present Executive continues in office.

Patron:	Mr. C.E. Woledge
President:	Mr. W.S. Dini
Vice-President:	Mr. W.T. Norris
Executive Committee:	Messrs. A.M. Otley, J.L. Marshall and W. Anderson.
Honorary Auditor:	Mr. A.J. Robb B.Comm.
Honorary Secretary-	
Treasurer:	Miss P.G. Rogers

Discussion was then held on the possibility of issuing a Directory of Members. It was decided to do so, the form of the questionnaire to be circulated, to be decided by the Executive.

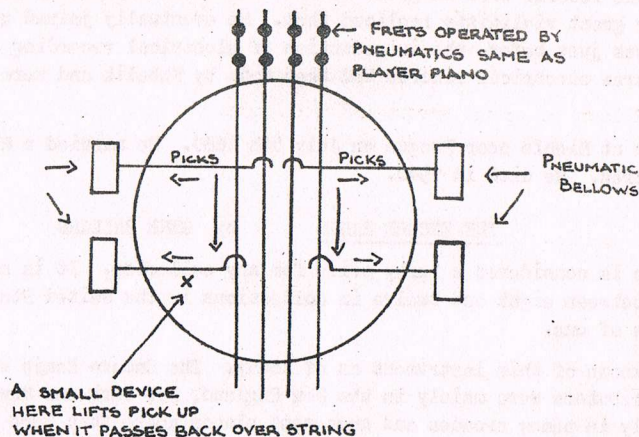
TALKING MACHINE MEMORIES - Recording artists who have visited New Zealand
by C.E. Woledge.

JAN KUBELIK

At the time, 1908, when classed as one of the world's greatest violinists, Jan Kubelik came through New Zealand and had a very successful tour. Undoubtedly he was a wonderful performer but he was often considered too much of a showman and his efforts in this direction were sometimes not pleasing.

I attended two of his concerts and on each occasion his by-play and affectation was quite unnecessary. For instance his hair was very long and when he walked on to the stage he would be brushing it back from his forehead. He continued doing so during his acknowledgement of the great hand which he always received. Then suddenly he would look up to the box where, standing, removing a showy fur coat was a beautiful woman; I presume - his wife. She would stand near the front of the box and gaze round the audience. Then she would carefully fold the coat and place it at the front of the box. Incidentally, at this time, fur coats became very fashionable and it was the ambition of most women to own one. Then more by-play - while Kubelik stood gazing at the box, the pianist walked on the stage and seated himself at the piano. Kubelik then gave a nod, the pianist struck a note, while the artist gave attention to his tuning pegs. This act was repeated two or three times and then, to cap it all, the artist himself walked over to the piano and struck a note - when would he get started? However, he received a reminder from a member of the audience, who, in a loud clear voice, hollowed "Give it a go and chance it!"

This did the trick and from then on we were treated to a magnificent concert which it would be hard to describe. This real artist put all he had into his performance and the audience swayed with every stroke of the bow. His fast passages were like fireworks and his speed was phenomenal. A lady sitting next to me remarked that Kubelik was quivering like a jelly which was somewhat true because his head was shaking so much that his long hair had partly fallen over his forehead giving him a rather grotesque appearance.

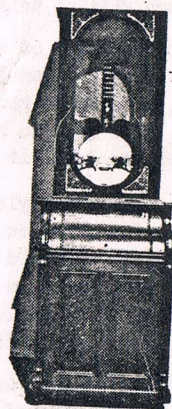


THE PICKS PICK THE STRINGS WHEN MOVING IN DIRECTION OF ARROWS AND ARE RAISED UP BY A SMALL DEVICE SO AS TO PASS OVER THE TOP OF THE STRINGS ON THE RETURN TRIP.

BELOW: THE ENCORE BANJO
AND ABOVE: HOW IT WORKS



THAT MYSTERIOUS
NUMBER



Some of Kubelik's first records were released on the Fonotipia label and were recorded in Italy. For a time his records were in great demand, but their popularity gradually dwindled and other records by great violinists replaced them. He eventually joined up with H.M.V. exclusively. This was just before the introduction of electrical recording and, according to my notes, in 1927 three electrical records had been made by Kubelik and were almost ready for release.

Kubleik was born at Miehle near Prague on July 5th 1880. He married a Russian Countess and they had seven children. He died in 1940.

THE ENCORE BANJO

by GENE BALLARD

The Encore Banjo is considered a lucky prize for any collector. It is not certain, but believed there are between eight and twelve in collections in the United States. My wife and I are the proud owners of one.

Very little is known of this instrument as of today. The Encore Banjo was made in the early 1890's and the distributors were mainly in the New England, New York and New Jersey areas. They could be found mostly in penny arcades and amusement places where they were leased. The manufacturer of the Encore Banjo is unknown at the present time. The name "American Automatic Co." and the "Automatic Co. of New Jersey" are found stamped on the back of some of the instruments. These firms may have been just the distributors. The cases ranged from fairly ornate - early models - to plain ones. The Encore Banjo uses an endless paper roll of special design. The music is produced by four mechanical pickers which pluck each string. Little pneumatically - operated pearl buttons operate the fingering on the frets. It is a coin operated instrument.

BOOK REVIEW: TALKING MACHINES by V.K. Chew - Reviewed by Pamela Rogers

Some years ago I acquired part of an early Columbia disc machine. As it was the fairly rare 1902 A.J. Model which is top-wound, I was anxious to complete it but lacked sufficient information about the missing parts. I wrote to the Science Museum in Kensington and received a most helpful reply signed by V.K. Chew. So it was no great surprise to me to find that Mr. Chew has written a book which will be helpful to many people.

At a time when the price of books is rocketing it is pleasing to see this eighty page publication marked 7/6. For this small sum, collectors can obtain a book of easy reference, generously illustrated, printed on good paper and covering a wide range of subjects all related to the talking machine. It is good to have information on the British companies and illustrations of British machines as, to date, it has been difficult to get these details.

Mr. Chew has a readable style which makes this a book to enjoy and small enough to be tucked into a pocket. Our illustration shows part of the book's cover - featuring one of the very handsome Melba machines produced by the Gramophone Co. I highly recommend this book and suggest that you purchase your copy from the Secretary of the City of London, Phonograph and Gramophone Society, Ernie Bayly, 19 Glendale Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Hampshire, England, adding 10d. for postage - and how about asking about membership of the London Society.

While you are writing for your copy of Talking Machines you may like to ask about the latest catalogue reprint of the City of London Gramophone and Phonograph Society, that of the Paillard Catalogue. Knowing the difficulty of obtaining overhorn disc machines in New Zealand, there will be many envious eyes cast over the numerous illustrations, two pages of which we have photographed for you.

ALMA GLUCK

by STYLUS

Having noticed Marcia Davenport's autobiography 'Too Strong for Fantasy' in the local library, I was interested to read a review of it. In this it was revealed that Mrs. Davenport's mother was the famous American soprano, Alma Gluck whose lovely voice warms me from her records.

Alma Gluck was born in Rumania in 1884. When she was six, with her mother and sisters she came to America. As a young girl she took a training course in shorthand and typing and then worked in an office. She married at eighteen and shortly afterwards a friend of her husband heard her singing. Through this chance contact came lessons with Maestro Arturo Buzzi-Peccia in the winters -- in the summers, lessons in Europe. In her first season at the New York Metropolitan Alma Gluck sang eleven parts in three languages. She was an immediate success, in fact a sensation. She had intelligence, personality and charm and a pure lyric soprano. Less than a year after her Metropolitan debut she sang her first song recital to a packed house.

One of her most famous recordings was "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny". This sold over one million copies; at that time it was by far the largest sale any record had ever had in America. Alma Gluck made about 140 records and she was very particular over their standard. Some were therefore not issued because she would not release them. She used to say that a day at Camden (recording for the Victor Talking Machine Company) was more tiring than a week of concerts. Amongst her best records from a point of technical perfection are "Come Beloved", "Lo Here the Gentle Lark", and "The Lass With The Delicate Air". Her own favourite amongst her records was "L'Heure Exquise".

Alma Gluck's recordings are not particularly difficult to find and the pleasure they give is worth the effort of the search.

THE SOUND OF SUCCESS (Continued)

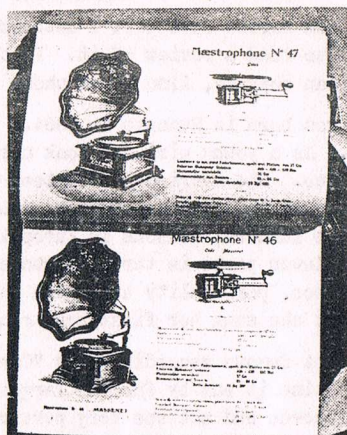
by JAMES HEATH

"The first requirement is a turntable revolving at 78 r.p.m. and a pick-up fitted with a 78 stylus." Half right! If only it was that simple. To start with, only some 78's were recorded at 78 r.p.m. For instance, early Columbias went at 80. Some G. and T's at about 74 or 75. In fact anything between 70 and 86, or beyond, so if your hearing is acute, you will need a variable speed turntable. And now for the 78 stylus. Strictly speaking, there ain't no such animal. The speed has nothing to do with the stylus. What matters is the groove profile. The groove is usually a V shape, with or without a rounded bottom, and if it is rounded, the radius of the curve is variable. The modern sapphire sold for these records is a cone with its tip rounded to a part-sphere shape. To track properly the stylus must touch the groove at only two points on the flat side walls of the groove. It must not touch the bottom or it will skate aimlessly around. Thus it can be seen that a given stylus is only suitable for a certain range of groove profiles, or, inaccurately put, groove widths. As a guide, most early Columbias and most post-war records have narrow grooves which will take a plain 78 stylus. Early H.M.V.'s are wide and shallow. Other companies followed their own ideas and happy inspirations, not to mention Pathe and the kindred 'broad-gauge' firms, of which more later. And to get back to non-standard 78's, here is a peach of an idea. To make groove jumping less likely the extreme wiggles of the groove were reduced by buffing or polishing the master. (That has the grooves standing in relief.) So that bright idea made the groove shallower and blunter, and the groove profile was no longer constant throughout the one record! The mind boggles!

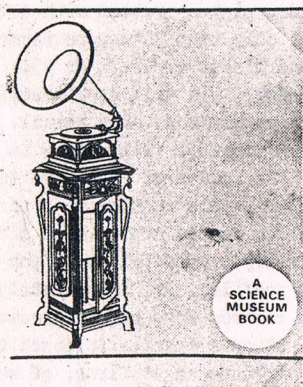
Now I should clear up two points. The sound is impressed on the record in the form of undulations or wiggles in a groove. When the groove snakes from side to side (moving parallel to the record surface) it is Lateral Cut, sometimes called Needle-Cut, or lateral modulation. When the vibration is vertical to the record surface (the groove gets shallower or deeper), the result is Vertical Cut (Hill and Dale), or vertical modulation. Secondly, 1 mil equals 1 thousandth of an



THE GRAND PREE RECORD



FROM THE PAILLARD CATALOGUE



ON THE COVER OF 'TALKING MACHINES'



ALMA GLUCK
(Soprano)

inch (0.001 in.) Now the hard stuff!

1. As we have learnt, a 78 groove is in the form of a V, the two sides-'walls'-meeting at an angle of about 90 degrees. The bottom may be a sharp point or a curve forming the arc of a circle or a complex shape somewhat like half an egg-slit lengthways - so there is a gently curved floor to the groove, the floor meeting the walls with a rather sharper curve. All these 78's use lateral modulation.

If the record is to be played with a diamond or sapphire, this must be in the shape of a cone which terminates in a blunt, part-sphere shape, of such a radius that the needle rides the groove at only two points, one on each wall of the groove about half way up. This radius is from 2 to 4.5 mils. A metallic or fibre needle will grind to fit the groove exactly, so the only requirements are a point fine enough to fit into the groove and not so sharp as to cut it.

2. The Diamond Disc groove is much simpler, just a Semi-circle, the diamond stylus being a hemisphere which fits it exactly. The radius of this hemisphere is 6 mils for regular Diamond Discs and 3 mils for the Long Play discs. The precise fit is why a steel needle cannot be used. The diamond spreads the weight of the reproducer over a wide area. The steel needle is sharper and so the weight is concentrated at the bottom of the groove, and the combination of finer point and greater pressure per square inch cuts the groove. Vertical modulation is used. (To be continued.)

TALKING OF CYLINDERS
THAT MYSTERIOUS NUMBER by WALTER NORRIS

I wonder how many collectors have looked at the rim of a Blue Amberol cylinder and wondered at the significance of that small number situated just after the word "patent". For often the cylinders have the same title, artist and catalogue number, yet this small number differs. I asked Mr. Woledge about this and he informed me that this is the matrix number. Edison was never able to produce a "mother" cylinder and from this make a stamper. His matrix was made from the original wax and he used this to produce Blue Amberols or, in fact, all later cylinders until it showed signs of wear. This meant getting the artist back into the recording studio to make another wax as close as possible to the previous one. This was a much repeated happening should the selection prove popular. Mr. Woledge says that, as can well be understood, often the artist was not able to keep the same high standard all the time and customers were quick to realise this. After studying various copies of the same selection, they would then come into his shop and ask for the cylinder - specifying the exact "take" number required. Often this could not be supplied, the only ones in stock perhaps being later pressings. I have a Blue Amberol recording of 'Roamin' in the Gloamin' by Harry Lauder - the small number on this is 75. Under this system it means that Lauder must have recorded this particular number at least that many times, probably more. Some cylinders bear a number well over a hundred. This system of stating the matrix numbers was also used on four minute Black Wax Amberols but does not appear on two minute cylinders. Of course the very early two minute black wax had no title at all on the end of the cylinders. In theory, each record box contained a small slip of paper on which was printed the details. This was designed apparently for the purpose of sticking to the side of the box but collectors of the early days were no more careful than we are today and many of these cylinder boxes have become parted from these slips and the only way to identify the cylinder is by playing it. I asked Mr. Woledge whether these identification slips came to New Zealand in bulk but he said that this was not so, each was in its individual box.

These two minute black wax cylinders I find hard to catalogue without the slips but if they are held to the light it is possible to see a very small number scratched on them. These cylinders come in a box without the felt lining and must have been made before a way was found of inscribing the title but as they are always announced so the title can be identified by playing. The illustration clearly shows the position of the matrix number. The cylinder has a square cut end and

this type, Mr. Woledge says, is superior in quality to those with the rounded or tapered end.

THE GRAND PREE RECORD

This is a most elegant record label about which we know little except it is of British manufacture. The design is most attractive and the sample shown in our illustration is in the original paper cover; the record is owned by Donald Cameron of Wellington.

TALKING OF BOOKS

We know that many of you collect books about phonographs, books on music, books about singers, in fact - just books. So it has been quite a thrill to find that Mr. N.F. (Norm) Oberg has taken over Smiths Book Shop, 133 Manchester Street, Christchurch. He has a stock of 50,000 books, his prices are most reasonable and what is possibly most important from our point of view - he will accept requests, note them and supply when available. If you are writing to Norm with a "want", tell him as much as you can - the title, author and publisher if known. And tell him you are a member of the Society; we would like him to know he has our support. This new source of supply of books has meant a valuable addition to the library. Please note these titles:-

3b The Record Guide (1956 Supplement)

16 Record Collectors Series

a. Forming a Basic Library

b. Symphonies

c. Concertos

17 Daily Mail Book of Golden Discs (since 1903)

18 Records for Pleasure by John Ball Jnr.

19 The New Guide to Recorded Music (International Ed.) by Irving Kolodin

20 Richard Tauber - a Biography by Diana Napier-Tauber

21 Encyclopaedia of the World's Best Recorded Music, 1931 Edition

22 Edison Record Catalogue (Diamond Discs), 1924 Complete Edition

23 Gramophone Tips 1927

24 Catalogue of Long Playing and Medium Play Records 1954

A RECORD OF RECORDS

G.B.E.

"John Willie Come On" - by George Formby

Edison 2 Minute Wax Record No. 13771.

This cylinder, by the father of the George Formby of "Bless 'em all" fame is a typical humorous music-hall song, telling of John Willie's tendency to lag behind his wife, both in the streets, and in Madame Tussaud's waxworks. In the introductory bars of the song, comes the remark, "We-ell... (pause) - all coons say that!" In the street a strange woman approaches him saying "Have we not met before?"; whereupon his wife says, "I know it's mine, I found it first - John Willie come on!" In the waxworks, he is alone when the lights go out. Then suddenly, "I'm sure I 'eard Queen Elizabeth say - John Willie come on!" An amusing cylinder in the English tradition.