



# 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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Page 17.

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and Walter T. Norris

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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

AN INTERNATIONAL TOUCH It has been pleasing to note that many of the recent additions to our membership rolls have been overseas collectors and that more and more are making use of the services provided by the Society. This growing international flavour is reflected in this issue of our magazine particularly on our illustrations page where a large proportion of the photographs shown have been provided by Mr. L.A. Schlick of the United States and Mr. W. Keessen of Holland. We have much to learn from each other and much information to give and we would like to thank again all our contributors who are prepared to take time to assist their fellow collectors.

IF CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL then you have a very virtuous Secretary/Editor at the moment. She must confess to having mislaid (she never loses anything) the photographs which accompanied the article 'Musicians of the Pre Talking Machine Era'. She apologises for her misdemeanor and knows you will enjoy reading about these artistes.

CHRISTMAS MEETING: We would like to express the Society's thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Morris Jackson for their hospitality to members on the occasion of the final meeting of 1969. Morris had arranged an excellent programme of early films for us and we were particularly delighted to see a film made in Christchurch in 1928. In the introductory scenes we were shown some of the buildings and gardens and, dare I say it, things haven't changed a great deal in the intervening forty years! We were pleased to have with us Mr. Arthur Alleyway (our Patron) of Leithfield and Mr. Wally Colledge of Nelson. We would remind members that the Christchurch meeting is held on the fourth Monday of each month and anyone in the city at that time is most welcome to attend.

AT YOUR SERVICE: We are pleased to announce that Christchurch member Roger Cole will overhaul any gramophone or phonograph motor, including re-greasing the springs - for \$2.00; replacement of broken springs \$1.00 each extra. Workmanship guaranteed. Contact via the Secretary. We would like to add that those members who have taken advantage of Roger's offer have been very pleased with his service both the quality of his work and his prompt return of machines. We recommend this service to members.

## MUSICIANS OF THE PRE TALKING MACHINE ERA.

By D.H. Cameron

Artistes who were famous in the days before the Talking Machine became accepted as a musical and cultural medium, or who were at the height of their careers in the Talking Machine's early period and whose art was 'captured' to varying degrees after retirement or late in life are known to record collectors as 'The Old Guard'. Some such names known and possibly familiar to most members are:- singers, Sir Charles Santley, Adelina Patti and Ben Davies; violinists, Joachim, Sarasate, and Ysaye; pianist-



composer Edvard Grieg and stage personalities, Sir Herbert Tree, Sarah Bernhardt and Dan Leno.

For its November meeting, the Wellington Chapter was treated to a most enjoyable programme of such recordings by Mr. Roy Hedges, the possessor of a vast collection of many such celebrities, the very mention of whose names conjours up a feeling of awe in most collectors. The majority of the records played dated from the 1900 - 1910 period, about one third taken from cylinders and hillandale discs and the rest early laterals. With the exception of the last, all were from long-playing re-issues.

The session began with the great diva, Lilli Lehmann singing *Marten aller Arten* from Mozart's *Il Seraglio*. Patti's only rival, she was recorded in her late sixties but her voice, unlike Patti's, retained its colour. Her ability to execute difficult trills was amazing and the recording is a credit to the Odeon Company of Berlin who made it in 1905. The second record was even more surprising. It was by the French tenor Lucien Fugere who was born in 1848 and recorded when he was in his eighties. He sang the *Bird Catcher's Aria* from *The Magic Flute* also by Mozart and although short of breath displayed a wonderfully preserved voice. This record was one from a series 'Great Musicians of Yesteryear' made by Columbia in the 1930's. The series also included Harry Plunket-Greene, Sir Charles Santley and Sir George Henschel.

Of the legendary de Reszke family, the bass brother Edouard was heard singing the *Porter Song* from *Marta* by Flotow; a recording from the famous 1903 'Columbia Grand Opera Disc Record' series. Also represented was the baritone Jean Lassalle who formed a famous trio with de Reszkes. His only records were Pathe cylinders of 1902/3 and all in French. He was heard in *Di quella pira* from *Il Trovatore*.

Further female voices heard were Blanche Arral who, it was revealed, spent over a year in New Zealand in the early 1900's, Rosina Storchio who sang in the unsuccessful World Premier of *Madame Butterfly* and Salomea Kruszelnicka, the Polish soprano who made it a success sang *Musetta's Aria* *Leoncavallo's La Boheme* and *One Fine Day* from *Madame Butterfly*, both recordings being made by the famous Societa Italiana di Fonotipia Company of Milano. Of the lower register female voices, Emma Calve, the greatest *Carmen* of all time was heard singing the *Card Scene* from that opera and contralto Marianne Brandt sang the *Brindisi* from *Lucrezia Borgia* in a voice almost as deep as Clara Butt, the recording being from a Pathe 'Artista' cylinder of 1905. The great American Wagnerian soprano Lillian Nordica was heard singing *Tacea la notte* from *Il Trovatore*. This was one of her great numbers and despite its appeal to the gramophone historian, clearly demonstrates how this great soprano is considered a recording failure.

Of special interest were the three great stars of Verdi's *Otello*; Francesco Tamagno who created the tenor title role in 1888 sang *Esultate* - 45 seconds of brilliant tenor singing, Victor Maurel, the creator of the baritone role of *Iago* sang *Era la notte* and Giovanni di Nègri, Tamagno's understudy and later, rival, sang the famous *Morte* - Death of *Otello*. Also heard was the baritone Giuseppe Kashmann who was in the first night cast of New York's Metropolitan Opera House in 1883, singing *Carlos* the solo from *Don Carlos* by Verdi; taken from a G. & T. record of 1904 which was in the catalogues for only six months. From the same company and year we heard the buffo bass Vittorio Arimondi in an interpretation which set everyone laughing, of the *Serenade* from *Faust*.

To conclude, we were treated to Nellie Melba's recording of *Depuis le jour* from *Louise* by Charpentier. Melba began her career in the 1880's and carried on into the 1920's, becoming the greatest gramophone soprano.

The Wellington Chapter is most grateful to Mr. Hedges for such an interesting evenings entertainment.



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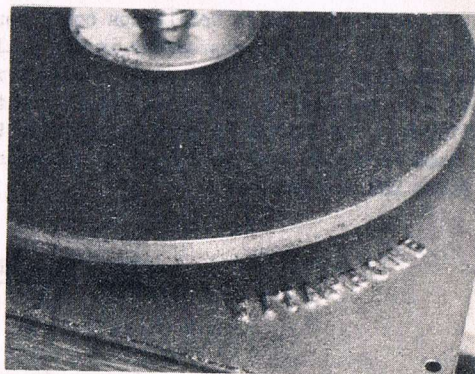
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THE VITAPHONE



### THE MARCONI VELVET TONE RECORD

By W. Keessen.

One of the methods undertaken by the Columbia Company to attack Victor's position on the disc-market, was the launching of the Marconi Velvet Tone records. These were unbreakable, thin and flexible discs with a paper core and a plastic surface. As the name implies, the Italian inventor of wireless takegraphy, Guglielmo Marconi was connected with the production of these. After a visit by Mr. Marconi to the American Graphophone Company plant at Bridgeport in 1906, it was announced that he had been engaged as the Company's advisor. Later the same year, came the production of the Marconi Velvet Tone records both singlesided and doublesided. The discs were sold with the caution that they be played only with Marconi Gold Plated Needles - all other needles would ruin them. It was apparently due to this that these records were not as successful as was hoped. In 1908, when the standard Columbia double disc was introduced, the manufacture of the Marconi Velvet Tone records was brought to an end.

### THE VITAPHONE

By Walter Norris.

It will be with great interest that many will view the photographs of an overhorn disc machine which so much resembles a Berliner Dog-Model (or Trade-Mark model). The proud owner is Mr. Lawrence A. Schlick of the U.S.A. who knows very little about this machine but would like to hear from anyone who can provide him with ANY information other than stated here. Mr. Schlick has been able to copy two advertisements from "The Phonoscope" of the year 1900 and these explain themselves. He has restored this machine as he obtained only part of the box and the reproducer from a fellow collector. Two of the illustrations are of his completed machine, one showing a close up of the bed plate. As he has not heard of another one in or outside U.S.A. he considers it a rare machine.

### MORE ABOUT EMERSON.

Last issue, we printed some photographs of an Emerson record label and stated that these were of the lateral cut type, the 45 degree cut not having been seen in New Zealand.

Mr. D.H. Cameron, a Wellington collector, has written to us stating that these will play about as well with the reproducer in the hill and dale position; this we tried and confirm that with some records, he is correct. However we suggest, if you have one of the swivel type reproducers on a machine, to get a new needle and try playing your Emersons with the reproducers in both positions. We thought it played best with the reproducer in the lateral position. Those who have the book 'From Tin Foil to Stereo' by Welch and Read may like to read more about Emerson and his work on pages 207 and 208.

### REPAIR OF EXTERNAL WOODEN HORNS.

By Roger Cole.

A good many external horn phonographs and gramophones, when located, have either been family Heirlooms for years, stuck in a corner and forgotten, or have been left out in a shed as junk which



is too good to throw out but not good enough to keep inside. In either case it is very often the horn which has suffered most from the neglect. If damage is not severe, repair can be made by filling the chips and cracks with a compound such as plastic wood, fibreglass, or beeswax, then smoothing down with fine sandpaper and revarnishing, taking care to protect any original transfers on the horn. The filler can be either painted or stained to a wood finish; beeswax when melted over a gentle heat can be mixed with a colouring powder to the appropriate shade.

Where damage is severe, however, it is a long and sometimes difficult task to restore the horn to its original glory. Apart from chips, cracks, and broken pieces, the seams, especially on horns with no rim bead, are often completely unstuck. There are two ways to go about repair.

#### METHOD 1.

1. Mount the horn bell-down on a flat surface, and nail small blocks at each seam to hold the shape. Often this shape is not perfectly circular, so note which way the horn is facing so if you remove it you can replace it in the same position.
2. Place three or four small hook-screws at equal intervals around the horn, and to these attach lengths of strong string, dropping the loose ends inside the horn through the small (top) end.
3. Now it is necessary to cramp in the horn. To do this, a good method is to obtain a large worm-drive hose clip, such as is used in motorcars to hold the radiator hoses. If not long enough, two or three may be riveted or soldered together. Place this loosely around the horn in the position where you intend to cramp the seams, over the top of the string mentioned in 2 above.
4. Take the loose end of the string and fasten it back onto the hook-screw so that it is now looped around the hose clip and will prevent it from slipping back up the horn when it is tightened.
5. With a screwdriver, slowly tighten the hose clip and clamp in the horn, applying P.V.A. glue as you go. Some felt or other material under the hose clip will prevent damage to the horn. I found P.V.A. the best glue to use, as many others dry somewhat brittle, and on removal of the tension tend to crack, and you have to start again. Allow at least 12 hours to dry, remove hose clip, and the job is done.

#### METHOD 2.

1. As in method 1, part 1.
2. A small distance from the base of the horn, perhaps two inches, place three strong eye-screws. Through these pass lengths of wire or very strong string (nylon fishing line, if very strong, might work), to the other end of which is attached a turnbuckle, as used in the rigging of yachts. The hooked end of the turnbuckles may need to be opened out a little to hook over the bottom of the horn. With the turnbuckle about two-thirds unwound, fasten the wire at the eye-screw with a small U-bolt so that the wire is fairly firm. The whole set-up will now resemble three wires holding up the mast of a ship, with the horn instead of the mast.
3. By slowly tightening the turnbuckles together, the downward tension will force the horn into shape. The seams may now be glued, tightened, and left for 12 hours for the glue to fully dry. Once again, P.V.A. glue is ideal.

Using this latter method it is possible to treat each seam individually (although of course this makes the repair process much longer), and for that reason is the method I prefer and in fact have used with success. Any gaps and cracks may now be filled as previously described, and your repair is complete.





**DAME NELLIE MELBA**  
(Soprano)

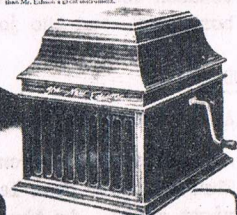
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SO - HIRE PURCHASE IS NOTHING NEW!



The beginning of a new year - and a decade - is often a time for reflection. James Heath looks back on some of his experiences in the dangerous world of buying and selling. 23.

FLEA MARKETS MADE EASY FOR AMATEURS or  
BUYING AND SELLING FOR FUN & PROFIT or  
HOW I MADE \$1,000,000 AND LOST IT AGAIN.....

BEING the true and honest account of how a gentleman made a mistake, and gaining wisdom, profited by his folly.

Once or twice, after buying something or negotiating a swap, I have woken up suddenly and bellowed, "Hey, I've been diddled!" I puzzled and pondered over this, but I couldn't see where I had gone wrong. Then..."Hey, I've got it!" It was the convincing argument the other fella used. Well, they say knowing what you're up against is half way to winning the struggle, so here goes, and if, as they say in the more pretentious How-To books, after perusing the following notes, the reader cries, "Hey, I've been diddled!" the authors task has been well worthwhile. (Ho Hum)

Diddle 1: "...in effect, a new article."

This is a beauty. The vendor (auctioneers word) tries to extort the original shop price from you on the grounds that the perfect condition means you are buying, in effect etc. etc. There is, of course, no shop guarantee, and usually the instructions and those lovely pamphlets (Congratulations, you have just bought the most advanced Bloggograph ever produced) etc. etc. are missing. Still, to squash this gambit, all you need is Diddle 2.

Diddle 2: "The minute it goes out of the shop, the value drops by half..." Self explanatory, and sometimes unfortunately, only too true.

Diddle 3: "What would you get if you took it into a shop?"

Another beaut. You are asked to picture yourself taking your wares into a junk shop (I refuse to call them 'Second-Hand Dealers,' or '2nd. hand,' for that matter) and being offered a ridiculously small sum. Nobody happens to mention that junk shops, especially the one in question, are renowned for the stinginess of their offers, and/or the frequency with which they decline all proffered items with a 'not really interested.' (Diddle 3A: This is often followed by "How much were you wanting anyway?" "\$10" "Well, we couldn't offer you more than \$2.50. Okay?" "Well, errrr..." "Fine." Exit chagrined and diddled.)

Diddle 4: "...not many about..."

A quickie. He's selling and he hasn't seen many.

Diddle 4A: "...very rare..."

He hasn't seen one before.

Diddle 5: "...very common..."

As above. He's buying and he happens to have seen two in the last week.

Diddle 6: "No real value... just of curiosity interest..."

Oh dear... He's obviously a collector, and he's working the old it's-of-no-value-give-it-to-me trick. He may also offer to handsomely recompense you by giving you something that is worth at least a tenth of what you are giving him. I have always wished I could pull the old do-as-you-would-be-done-by trick on this type of bird, but without exception, they have a highly developed sense of self-preservation, and they are completely impervious to their own gag...

And that is enough explanation. I will now relate a cautionary tale of encounter with a Sharp Trader. I will leave the task of spotting the catch to you. It will be excellent practice. And a splendid time is guaranteed for all!

A bright young gentleman rang me at 9p.m. one night about an advert I had rashly placed in the



paper, asked the usual demoralising question "Have you had many replies?" (I hadn't), made a few very disparaging remarks about the offering and demanded to see it immediately as he had to have it by tomorrow (or yesterday if possible). To oblige (Oh foolish me) I ignored my sleep and agreed. The impatient fellow took an hour and a half to come as many miles and settled down to a good fault-finding session. It was entirely unsuitable but he needed it by tomorrow, and he had to return his father's car in half an hour so hurry up and accept my offer, under the circumstances I can't offer much. He didn't. And (did it again) I sleepily agreed.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You just start at the beginning and go on till you come to the end, then stop". It was easy to see, in last issue of The Phonographic Record that we were a little carried away by the Christmas spirit and did not abide by the above advice given by Lewis Carroll in 'Alice In Wonderland'. We stopped before we came to the end. We are referring to the Christmas bonus readers received in the part article on the back page. We apologise to G.B.E. and now print below the complete story.

#### RECORDS OF RECORDS.

By G.B.E.

"EROICA" SYMPHONY -Part 5 (Scherzo), "EROICA" SYMPHONY-Part 6 (Finale, Allegro Molto) (Beethoven, Opus 55).

By Sir Henry J. Wood conducting the New Queen's Hall Orchestra. 12-in. blue label Columbia, No.L 1449. It may seem a trifle odd to deal with a single record from a set, as I am doing here, especially when that record is one of those "loners" which lie in wait so annoyingly for the collector as he rummages through an auction-room pile. Furthermore, the recording itself is no more than what one would expect from an acoustic orchestral disc - nothing thrilling to listen to. The interesting part of this record comes of all places, in the very last groove of the very last side; I am referring to the deep "stationary" groove which most acoustic 78's contain, to keep the needle off the label. In this case, one can distinctly hear the words "Thank you" each time the record makes a revolution. Whose voice it is I do not know, but I am tempted to suspect that, through an oversight on the part of the recording engineer, Sir Henry's words as he thanked the members of the orchestra were unwittingly immortalised on wax. Whatever the reason, this insignificant-looking disc is still an interesting "freak" in the world of collecting.

Book Review THE FURNITURE DOCTOR by George Grotz. Published by Herbert Jenkins, London reviewed by Pamela Rogers.

Once again Santa Claus dropped in my stocking a book which was 'just what I wanted'. Santa really is amazingly clever! In the publisher's blurb on the dust jacket of The Furniture Doctor, it states that the book has long been a favourite in America; in the foreword, George Savage explains that he has, for this edition, substituted the English equivalent for American terms likely to be obscure or misunderstood. Happily however he has not attempted to alter Mr. Grotz's breezy style. This most readable book provides any collector who is interested in restoring the wood-work of his talking machine with the complete method of old finish removal right through to the new finish. What impressed me most was that Mr. Grotz was fully aware that the average 'do it yourself' handyman has not a fully stocked chemist shop at his command. The methods are usually reasonably simple and yet I would think, most effective.

As one who has had to take up arms against borer (or wood worm) I was fascinated to read in the chapter on 'ageing techniques' the method for putting in the holes.

This is the book to keep by you while you are attempting restoration work - for the assistance it gives and also to keep on the bedside table as required reading - for the entertainment value.