

The Phonographic Record

The Journal of The Vintage Phonographic Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 1975

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NEW ZEALAND

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Papanui,
Christchurch,
NEW ZEALAND

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

As 1975 draws to a close, I would like to take time out to wish all members at home and abroad, a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May all your finds be rare ones.

I would especially like to thank all those by whose efforts the Society has run smoothly during 1975. It is due to active members' special efforts that you receive parts, balance the books, and have something to read, or are able to visit our display on a Sunday. As Editor of "The Phonographic Record", I would also like to thank all those who have contributed with either prose or pictures. We are very grateful for help in any way, however small.

"W.T.Norris".

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many subscriptions remain unpaid. PLEASE NOTE. This is the last issue of this magazine which will be posted until a renewal is received.

NEWS OF ACTIVE MEMBERS

Boyd Wright:

During December, Christchurch members were treated with a visit from an overseas member, Boyd Wright from Brisbane, Australia. Boyd had decided he would spend his holidays in New Zealand this year, and spent two weeks in our fair city. This gave him time to visit us and attend our Christmas party, our final meeting for 1975. Boyd! we enjoyed your visit, we hope you did the same.

This is as good a time as any to point out to any overseas members intending to visit New Zealand, to allow ample time to visit members in and around Christchurch.

Adair Otley:

Adair Otley and his wife Hilde left on December 10th to visit his wife's folks who live in Austria; they hope to spend Christmas there. This visit is to include a trip to England and a visit to U.S.A. en route home. We wish them a pleasant trip and safe return.

BOOK REVIEW

COLLECTING MECHANICAL ANTIQUES by Ronald Pearsall.

A book that is a recommended addition to any collection, as most, if not all, collectors are interested in collecting odds and ends other than phonographs. Even so, Collecting Mechanical Antiques contains 27 pages on mechanical music, and these are well illustrated (see Illustrations). The book also covers sewing machines, typewriters, telegraph and telephone; these are to name but a few. Although small (5½ x 8¼), is well presented with attractive cover with around 85 illustrations in a book with 197 pages. Cost in New Zealand \$7.05; in U.K. Three pounds and twenty-five pence. The Society has added a copy to its Library.

ILLUSTRATIONS

We have tried to include a few extra for Christmas.

PARAMOUNT

Originally included to illustrate Adair Otley's series on the Gennett Record Company. But it is also an attractive label colour-wise; has a mauve back-ground, gold wording except for the title which is black on white back-ground. Is ten inches in diameter; double-sided, electrically recorded, and made by Scott Henderson & Co. Sydney, Australia.

An Edison Bell advertisement for THE NEW COMBINATION PHONOGRAPH

What appears Bell's answer to Columbia's A.B. What we all want to know, is which came first?

COLLECTING MECHANICAL ANTIQUES

Taken from the cover, which shows what could be one of Howe's prototype sewing machines and also on illustration a motoscope taken from the same publication.

COLUMBIA

This is an unusual Columbia label about which we can find out absolutely nothing, so can someone help please! The red, white and blue tie has, we believe, been printed on before the title. The label otherwise, is just like a normal dark blue and gold Columbia label.

DOMINION

A hard to find label in New Zealand. Ten inch double-sided with attractive coloured paper label. Cream back-ground black record, with blue lettering on a coloured world. Made by Dominion Gramophone Records Ltd. at Luton, Beds., England. Can someone in England provide more information please?

AEOLIAN VOCALION

Mr W.Keessen was kind enough to send us this label among others. Thought that as we had illustrated the first label, (see Vol.10 Issue 1), we should illustrate its predecessor, the vertical cut. This is a double-sided twelve inch record, has a brown and black back-ground with gold lettering. We consider this label to now be very hard to find in New Zealand. Note the copyright date.

EDISON ELECTRIC LIGHT (see article)

AUGUST MEETING REPORT 2.10.75

G.B.East

Bill Dini regaled the assembled multitude with details of his recent visit to Australia. The hospitality extended by collectors and the many interesting machines examined helped to make his sojourn memorable in the best sense, while in his capacity as President of this Society he fulfilled a valuable diplomatic mission.

The gaps in Bill's collection of Edison cylinder phonographs have been (it seems) inexorably filling in recent years, so it came as no surprise to learn that he had brought back two early variants to join the array at the Antigua Boatsheds. These machines, exhibited at the meeting, are a 'suitcase' Standard Model A, c.1898, and the early and excessively rare Gem Model A of c.1899. The latter is distinguished by its front-mounted patent plate and control knob, gateless mandrel, large belt-pulley and the absence of the familiar Gem baseboard.

The local scene had, as ever, proved fruitful for that indefatigable accumulator of mechanical music-makers. With transparent nonchalance, Bill extracted from his mysterious carton an immaculate Orpheus automatic piano. This hand-cranked table-model instrument, similar in appearance to a miniature concert grand, plays anular cardboard discs interchangeable with those of an Ariston organette.

THE TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 10th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held at St.Mary's Merivale, Christchurch, on September 22nd and was conducted by our retiring President, W.Dini, who opened for discussion his report which had previously been circulated. W.Flecknoe, Hon.Treasurer, presented his balance sheet for 1974-75 which was adopted. Election of officers for the ensuing year took place.

PRESIDENT:

W.T.Norris

VICE PRESIDENT:

J.L.Marshall

TREASURER:

A.Otley

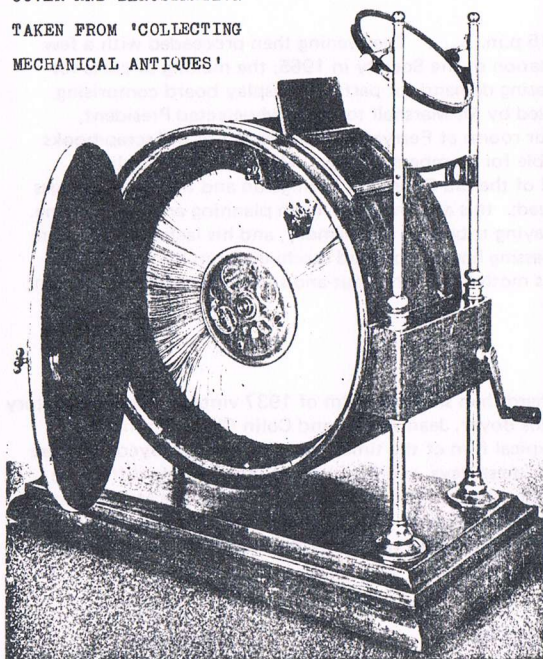
COMMITTEE:

B.Bucklay, W.Flecknoe, O. de Joux

SECRETARY:

L.Drummond (re-appointed)

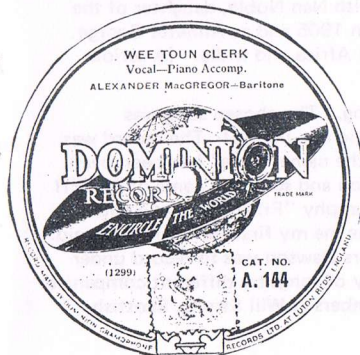
COVER AND ILLUSTRATION
TAKEN FROM 'COLLECTING
MECHANICAL ANTIQUES'



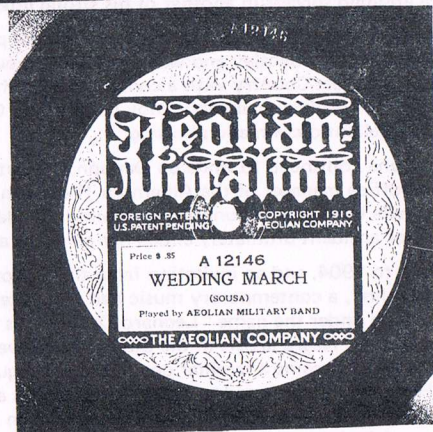
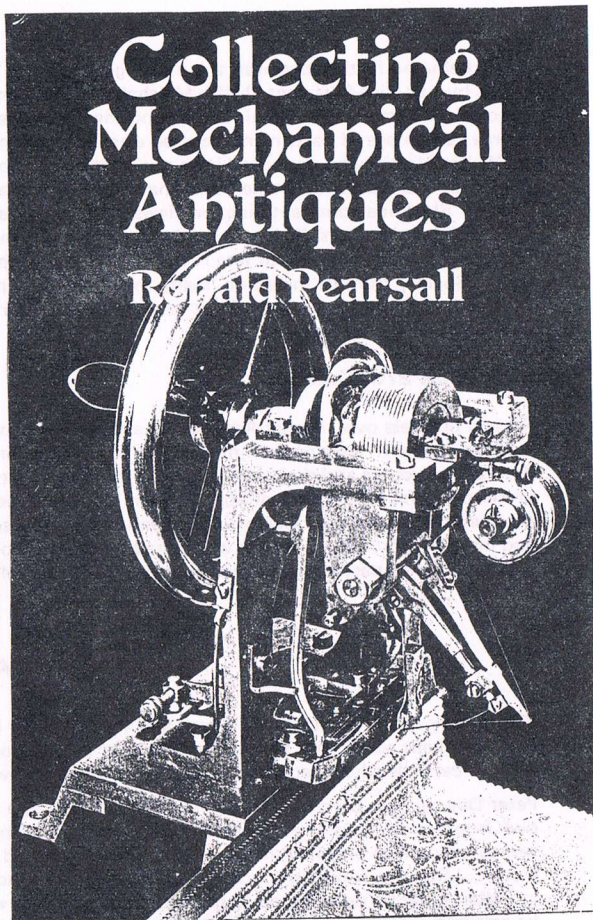
ABOVE:-MUTOSCOPE



COLUMBIA
BLUE LABEL



DOMINION COLOURED
LABEL



AEOLIAN VERTICAL CUT
LABEL

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15 p.m. The evening then proceeded with a few words by our Vice-President, Joffre Marshall, on the formation of the Society in 1965, the making of parts for restoration of members' machines etc., and the ever-increasing demand for parts. A display board comprising a large percentage of parts manufactured was then presented by Mr Marshall to the newly-elected President, Mr Walter Norris, who requested it be put on display at our rooms at Ferrymead. A display of old scrap-books of photos and mementoes taken over the years was available for members to view. Mr Otley showed slides with Mr Flecknoe commentating, on views of the removal of the old Church at Springston and the various stages and work involved to shift it to its present site at Ferrymead; this also involved much planning and fund-raising. Slides were also shown of our late Patron, Mr Wolledge, paying tribute to his memory, and his lasting impression on the Society from its inception, many members in his passing having obtained machines from his collection. A birthday cake made by one of our foundation member's mother, was then cut and supper concluded a pleasant and memorable evening...

MEETING 27th October -

Formal business over, Messrs Adair Otley and Barry Shepherd then showed a film of 1937 vintage, namely "History is Made at Night" starring such memorable names as Charles Boyer, Jean Arthur and Colin Clive. Lashings of drama, love scenes and dark coated 'badies' portrayed a typical film of the times, and was most enjoyed by those present. Films dating back almost 40 years are rarely seen these days, and members found a glaring difference between the simple and obvious plot of early films, and sophistication and glamour of those we see at the theatre and on television today. It was also noted that instead of 'interval' reeling off a series of advertisements for cigarettes, toothpastes, etc., as we see today, the 'interval' of latter years was vastly different - scenes of films to come

PETER DAWSON

Bob Moore

The history of the gramophone record and that of singer Peter Dawson are co-incidental. His is one of the voices that have kept apace with almost every year of the gramophone's history, "from two-minute cylinder to stereo LP." Few artists have recorded more prolifically and few have won such lasting admiration and universal popularity.

Peter Dawson was born in Adelaide in 1882, the son of a Scottish sea captain who later gave up the sea to found his own ironmongery business. Peter's parents encouraged his early interest in music and during his teens his ambition was to become an oratorio singer. For a time he worked in his father's business, at the same time taking lessons from C.J.Stevens, founder/conductor of the Adelaide Choral Society. In 1900 he won the bass solo competition at Ballarat and he was advised to go to London to study with the great Charles Santley. At around the same time he attained success in another of his strong interests, boxing, by winning an amateur championship.

Dawson arrived in Britain in 1901, and after a period of preliminary training with F.L.Bamford in Glasgow he auditioned for Santley and was accepted as a pupil. Santley took him under his wing and arranged for him to tour the West Country with a concert party, which included Madame Emma Albani, a much esteemed singer of the day. His professional debut took place at the Guildhall in Plymouth, and he was highly praised by the critics for his excellent diction and phrasing.

Fortune continued to smile on Dawson; about this time he met and fell in love with Nan Noble, daughter of the box-office manager of the Alhambra Theatre in Leicester Square. They married in 1905 and as Annette George his wife later sang in concerts with him in England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. (A serious motor accident ultimately ended her career as a public performer).

Back to 1904, and an invitation from the Edison Bell Company to make a recording. The chosen song was "Navaho", a contemporary music hall favourite, and for his efforts Dawson was paid one pound! The record was released under the name "Leonard Dawson" as the company manager considered the name "Pete" had been over-worked by Negro artists in the States! However, this was only a temporary decision and soon the name of PETER DAWSON became a familiar one in the catalogues. Dawson recalls in his autobiography "Fifty Years of Song": "Harry Bluff, who used to make those famous announcements on each record, gave me my first thrill when he said: "'The Bandolero', sung by Peter Dawson. An Edison Bell record!" In a few years Dawson was to record under several fictitious names as well as his own because of the demand for a wide variety of songs by different companies; he recorded the lighter popular songs under the name Frank Dalby, music hall numbers as Will Strong, Scottish

songs as Hector Grant; an interesting sidelight is that during a break in a recording session one day he'd been overheard imitating Harry Lauder singing "I Love A Lassie" and was asked to record songs of this kind under an assumed name. So popular were these recordings that Dawson, suitably attired in kilt and tam o'shanter, was soon appearing as Hector Grant at the music halls. It appears that Hector Grant was so convincing that many years later when Dawson told Harry Lauder there'd been no such person Lauder refused to believe him.

Another of Dawson's well-known pseudonyms was J.P. McCall, under which name he composed musical settings of many of Rudyard Kipling's Barrack Room Ballads and other poems, among them "Mandalay", "Boots", "Route Marchin", and "Cells".

During his career Dawson recorded some three and a half thousand titles on cylinder and disc recordings, and by 1940 total record sales exceeded twelve million; his two most popular recordings were "The Floral Dance" and "The Cobbler's Song" from "Chu Chin Chow".

To return to his early years of recording; with the proceeds from his first recordings for Edison-Bell he and Nan were able to buy their first furniture — a bedroom suite (including bed, wardrobe, washstand and dressing table), all for ten pounds!

Between 1904 and 1906 Dawson recorded for various companies, including Louis Sterling's enterprising new concern (which marketed their cylinder discs for a competitive ninepence, threepence cheaper than Edison-Bell and sixpence less than the prestige Edison company; Sterling, incidentally, was later to head the great E.M.I. recording empire), also recording for the Nicole company, whose chief executive, Arthur Brooks, afterwards became chief recording manager for Columbia.

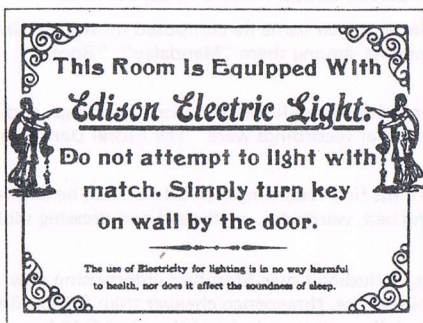
In 1906 Dawson signed an exclusive contract with HMV, with a minimum guarantee of twenty-five pounds for the first year! In actual fact he received seventy-two pounds for that year, considered quite a handsome sum for those days. The contract with HMV was on the basis of a guinea for each solo and 10/6 for each duet or quartet. Dawson remained with HMV for the rest of his recording career.

In 1909 Dawson returned to Australia to tour with soprano Amy Castle's concert party. Despite the primitive condition of Australian roads in those pioneer years of motoring the company appeared in all the capital cities as well as over sixty country towns. His hometown, Adelaide, afforded him a celebrity's welcome. During this, and subsequent tours in other Commonwealth countries, critics were unanimous in their appraisal of him, speaking of his "mastery of different styles of vocalisation." Back in England further assignments followed and in 1910 he was principal baritone in the season's Chappell Ballad Concerts. In 1912, under the conductorship of George W. Byng, Dawson was one of several soloists taking part in an ambitious recording of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a recording made in the old style, using the metal recording trumpet with insulating tape tied round it to eliminate vibrations and rattle!

In an interview once Peter Dawson remarked that the musical world is "divided into three classes: the high brow (10%), the would-be high brow (10%), those who like a good tune (75%), and the remaining five per cent made up of the incorrigible..... the boogie woogie croony enthusiasts." Dawson's own particular tastes were relatively catholic; in the early twenties he even made a series of recordings on 'Physical Culture' exercises.

During World War I he entertained troops both in Australia and England and enlisted as a private in the Australian infantry. His first post-war engagement was at a farewell concert given in the Albert Hall, London, by the great coloratura soprano Tetrazzini. Dawson continually expanded his repertoire, and although his popularity was greatest in songs of a lighter vein, he was also an accomplished interpreter of German lieder; a notable lieder recital, (with works by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, and Richard Strauss), took place at Wigmore Hall, London, in 1924, when Dawson's accompanist was Gerald Moore. During these immediate post-war years too he was a member of a small group of performers taking part in what were called International Celebrity concerts designed to bring "opera to the people." Another member of this party was the New Zealand-born soprano Rosina Buckman.

The advance of broadcasting brought Dawson a new audience of admirers. He made his radio debut at a reception at Australia House, London, in 1931, and thereafter followed numerous BBC broadcasts and 'on air' appearances in the various countries he visited. When, in his sixties, he was still a regular broadcaster and in 1947, aged 65, took part in twenty seven BBC programmes, apart from nearly a hundred concert appearances and a number of recording sessions in the same year.



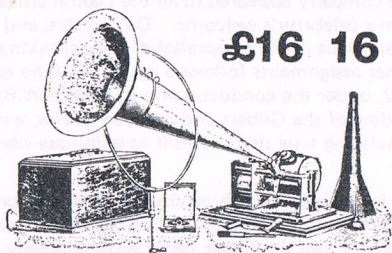
EDISON ELECTRIC LIGHT POSTER



PARAMOUNT LABEL

A1 GRAND

£16 16 0



NEW COMBINATION PHONOGRAPH

ON THIS MACHINE ANY Phonograph RECORD can be used.

The RECORDS for what are known as "GRAND" Machines are
5½ in. in diameter; those in general use are 2½ in.

THE "COMBINATION" USES BOTH PERFECTLY.

It is much lighter and more portable, and its reproductions with "Grand" Cylinders are

LOUD AS A MAN SINGS

Its Musical Records and Expression are clear, distinct, and pleasing. It also reproduces
splendidly the small Records in ordinary use.

YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN RECORDS.

NEW THIS SEASON. Price only £16 16s.

Send for our Illustrated Catalogue and Portrait Souvenir.

EDISON-BELL CONSOLIDATED PHONOGRAPH CO., LD.,

39, CHARING CROSS ROAD, LONDON, W.C.

EDISONIA LD., 20, Cheapside. Laboratory: 25 to 29, Banner St., E.C.



PETER DAWSON

When the second world war broke out Dawson, although too old for active service, nevertheless, contributed generously to the war effort as he had done during the first conflict, and took a job working in a factory that manufactured food containers and other essential products. In 1942, at the invitation of the New Zealand government, he undertook a month's tour of the Dominion to boost funds for a fifteen million pound war loan. He returned to New Zealand the year after hostilities ended and, as had been the case for the previous five tours, his concerts were sell-outs. In spite of his advancing age his vocal powers and impeccable musicianship remained unaltered. A New Zealand reviewer remarked:

"For decades he has stood in the first flight of concert singers, delighting his hearers everywhere, and defying the passage of the years. Durability is one of his greatest assets, but personality ranks next to his voice among the qualities which have made Peter Dawson a headliner on stage, screen, radio, and gramophone discs throughout the world. Above all, he has the gift of winning appreciation for songs above the common standard of the day."

When Peter Dawson died at the age of seventy-nine in 1961 it was the final curtain to a life lived to the fullest, a voice stilled after more than half a century's unbroken record giving untold pleasure to several generations.

A SELECTION OF PETER DAWSON RECORDINGS ON BLACK G & T DISCS.

Black G & T (London, 1904-5)

- 3-2126 "When Stars were Young"
- 3-2224 "Asleep in the Deep"
- 3-2259 "Bedouin Love Song"

Black G & T (London, 1906)

- 3-2295 "Lanagan's Song"
- 3-2319 "Hybrias the Cretan"
- 3-2407 "In Cellar Deep"
- 3-2433 "Unless"

Black G & T (London, 1907)

- 3-2797 "The Shipwright"
- 3-2857 "The Bandolero"
- 3-2899 "Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond"
- 02086 Introduction: "Elijah"

(from "The New Catalogue of Historical Records 1898-1908/9" by Robert Bauer, 1947).

EDISON ELECTRIC LIGHT POSTER

This poster is obtainable from the Vintage Phonograph Society. It is not on metal, but printed on stiff card. This poster was originally put out by the Thomas A Edison Co. in 1890 to remind people using electric light that it was not like gas and therefore did not have to be lit. It is also of interest, that a German by the name of Walther Nernst invented an electric lamp in 1897 which did have to be lit with a match.

We hope to produce a detailed article on Nernst at a later date with clear photographs, as we have a member in Christchurch who still has a working model.

These plaques, made in aluminium can be also obtained from MIDCO A20, Box 15370 Long Beach, California 90815 U.S.A. Cost \$4.95 post paid.

THE "GENNETT" RECORD COMPANY, U.S.A.

(Part 12... "The Epilogue")

Edited by Adair Otley

It was in the Spring of the year 1930 that a certain American friend, (to whom we refer here as 'Mr X') who was connected at the time with a Dance Band-Agency, travelled to Richmond, Indiana to ascertain the reason why correspondence from his firm previously mailed to the Starr Pianoforte Concern had not been answered.

Upon arriving on the scene Mr X soon discovered that the great plant was now ghostly silent and empty - save for one corner of the vast building, where a selection of miscellaneous parcels of records were being offered for sale (at a few cents a dozen!); but this was not all that was left, after consulting the salesman, Mr X found the answer to the riddle why his correspondence had not been answeredthere before him were Starr pianos along with several phonographs being sold (for as little as FIVE DOLLARS A PIECE!).

This was all so hard to believe - it seemed, but in actual fact was the order of the Receivers for the sale of the company's "material assets", which meant that literally anything and everything was available without reserve prices.

Mr X enquired about matrices - and was told: 'they were going as well' - and being a far-sighted man, he had already imagined something very much like the present-day collecting frenzy, and therefore matrices interested him more academically. So after some persuasion, the rather bored looking Sheriff's officer turned and disappeared into the deserted and echoing building to locate someone with authority who knew where the matrices were kept..... Later he returned to report:- failure; no responsible person with authority; no matrices; nothing! Mr X began to protest, and in response to this he was invited to: 'take a look for yourself'.

About an hour later, a very hot, grimy and frustrated Mr X returned to the entrance of the plant; all his former enthusiasm now most effectively damped, and as he turned in disgust to look back upon a once thriving enterprise, he noticed a negro boy burning bundles of Gennett advertising material; to him - this was the last straw

The shellac Eldorado was now only a matter of scrap metal and wastepaper..... and so now, as we recap a little, it seems a far cry from that 'first' advertisement which appeared during the early stages of the First World War; to be precise the actual date was March 1916 - and this fascinating story about the existence of the "Gennett" Company was to last a mere 14 years now, it is all but a legend; the plant; the company; - the enterprise - none of these exist but, fortunately for record collectors today, records still exist bearing the former Company's labels (as we have mentioned in previous parts of this story).

The records themselves remain to echo the memory of a former era which is now part of history.

(Next Issue - a new story - "Recollections of the Dance Band Era - 1931"

RECORD LISTENING POST No.15

by Barry Sheppard

To open our review in this Issue, a packet of Discs have just arrived from the FESTIVAL Warehouse - and - what a line-up! We find first of all an Album made by the True Blues Travelling Dance Band with the title:- "Era of the Flappers". (containing songs of the 20's, 30's, and so on - up till the present time) - such oldies heard are:- IT'S A SIN TO TELL A LIE/ON THE GOOD SHIP LOLLIPOP/LITTLE WHITE LIES/MY HAPPINESS - and many more; actually, the music itself covers nearly half a century of American popular music. The 'era' commences from: "WHEN THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE" (which was published in 1919-to): "CABARET" (the title song of the Broadway Musical that opened late in 1966). A worthy little Album which I think will delight all our readers who like music with nostalgia here and there. The Number is:- (PROJECT 3 - P.J.I. 1038)

Still with FESTIVAL - the next recent release comes from a well known light Orchestra, that of Tommy Garrett. The title of this L.P. is:- "The 50 Guitars of Tommy Garrett" - (HORIZON -HZ-65). Listening to this fantastic recording by Mr Garrett, I found all tracks, ten in all, very clear with well selected numbers - such as:- LARA'S THEME/SPANISH EYES/MICHAEL/ WHAT NOW MY LOVE?/ - just to mention a few. They are all very tuneful, and for added pleasure, this pressing is in full stereo.

Contd. next issue...