



The Phonographic Record

The Journal of the Vintage Phonograph Society of New Zealand

A Society formed for the preservation of Recorded Sound

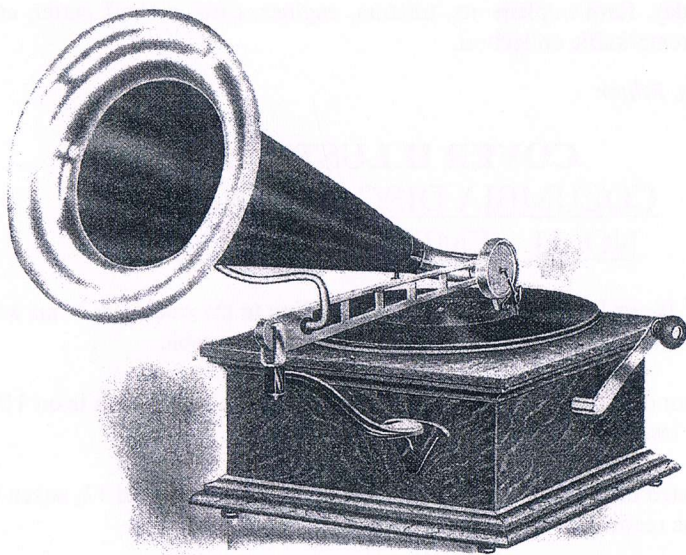
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NEW ZEALAND

COLUMBIA DISC GRAPHOPHONE EMPIRE 1906 No 11 MODEL BL



Courtesy Larry Schlick

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Well it appears that I have been proved wrong in that the first copy by a new printer has turned out well.

We are grateful to all who have helped us. As stated so many times, this is your magazine and I only try to put it together with what you have all kindly sent me.

We hope to include in this issue more illustrations taken from the Wagener Catalogue. The Wagener Museum, we covered in the last issue was all about its founder. It was an amazing place in its heyday.

I was able to visit it twice many years ago. We drove to Kaitaia and took the bus to Cape Reinga calling at the Wagener Museum for morning tea on the way.

This was the first working museum I had visited in New Zealand.

The curators demonstrated the music boxes, the gramophones, player pianos, jukeboxes etc. Our problem was we were only able to stay the length of time that the bus allowed, which was much too short. We had lunch at the Cape Reinga Light House and then we travelled back down Ninety Mile Beach, arriving back at Kaitaia before tea.

I always intended to retrace my tracks in a car but never did, now I wish I had. I was sorry to see the lot sold. It took four days to sell the contents of the Museum. This included radios, guns, artefacts, lamps, clocks, bottles, in fact you name it, it was for sale. The last day was the only day where selling was conducted at the Museum site. All the rest was sold in Auckland.

On this last day, farm implements, tractors, engines, carts, a chaff cutter, etc., which concluded a remarkable collection.

Walter Norris, Editor

COVER ILLUSTRATION

COLUMBIA DISC GRAPHOPHONE

NO. 11 EMPIRE 1906. TYPE BL

The 'Empire' is our lowest priced model. According to the catalogue it has a solid oak case, is fitted with the same reproducer and has a 10" turntable.

The only major difference we can see is the size of the cabinet which is on 11¼" square and is less decorative.

The price quoted in the catalogue was US \$13.95 and this included 12, seven inch Columbia disc records.

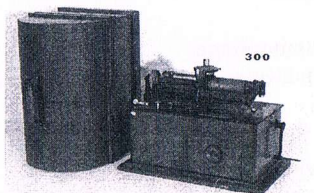
We have labelled this machine Columbia because it was made by them but only sold through mail order firms.

We are again indebted to Larry Schlick for a good copy taken from his catalogue which he kindly sent us.

THE WAGENER MUSEUM SALE



La Gloria Table Model



Edison Spring Motor Phonograph



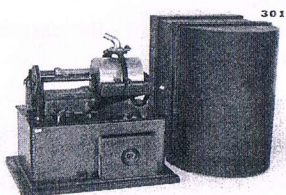
Symphonion Disc Music Box



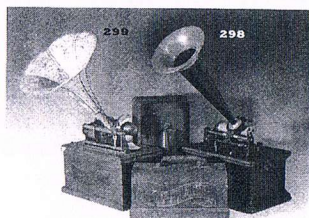
Coin Operated Mutoscope



Edison Amberola 1A



Edison 'Concert' Phonograph



Columbia B 'The Home' Graphophone

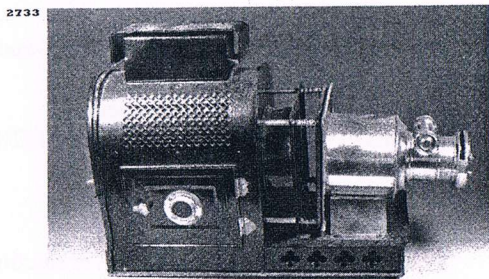
Columbia BK Graphophone



Coin Operated Postcard Dispense



Rolling Butter Stamp



Tin & Brass Magic Lantern

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE WAGENER MUSEUM

La Gloria Table Model Gramophone:

Catalogue No 313. C1940. Was valued before the sale at between \$150 and \$300, and was sold for \$600.

Edison Spring Motor Phonograph:

Catalogue No 300. c1898. Estimate \$1800 - \$4000. Sold for \$2400.

A rare model in New Zealand

Symphonium Disc Music Box:

Catalogue No 354. c1900. Coin in the slot - the case was minus pediment and base, with only one disc. Sold for \$3000.

Edison Amberola 1A:

C1910. These were sold on New Zealand for £60 (\$120). Another rare machine in New Zealand. Estimate \$1800 - \$3000 - sold for \$4700.

Edison Concert Phonograph:

C1904. Had brass horn with it. Another rare and hard to find machine. Estimated value at \$2000 - \$4000. It sold for \$3200.

Coin Operated Mutoscope:

Dated 1920. The catalogue stated this machine was made of cast iron.

Known as 'what the butler saw'! Pre-auction estimate \$1500 - \$3000. Was sold for \$4400.

Columbia Model B Phonograph (one on left):

Had original horn and carrying case, minus key. Yellow petal horn. Estimate \$600 to \$1000. Sold for \$1400.

Columbia BK Phonograph:

With witches hat horn, no handle. Pre-auction estimate \$600 - \$1100. Sold for \$900.

Coin Operated Post Card Dispenser:

Pictorial Post Cards Machine. Dated 1920. Estimated \$1500 - \$2000. Was sold for \$1800.

Rolling Butter Stamp:

New Zealand and Fern Pattern. Pre-auction estimate was \$150 - \$250. Sold for \$950.

THE WAGENER MUSEUM SALE

401



Ship's Piano

378



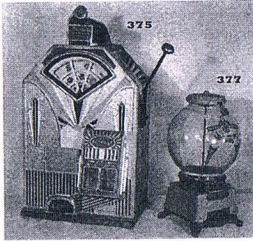
Fortune Telling Wall Machine

379

371



'Old Mill' Wall Game



One Armed Bandit

374

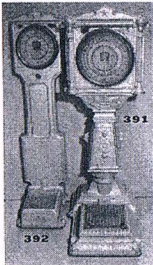


Gumball Machine

369



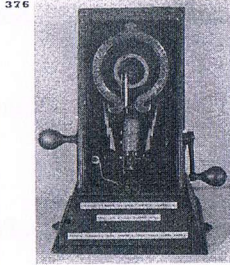
"Electricity is Life" Machine



Coin Operated Scales



The Mystery Box



Electric Shock Machine

368



Perfume Dispenser



Postage Stamp



Columbia Record

Tin and Brass Magic Lantern:

Estimated \$250 - \$350. Sold for \$415.

A Ship's Piano:

By Cramer. Dated 1920. Unusual. Estimate \$2000 - \$4000. It appears it did not sell outright.

Fortune Telling Wall Machine:

Made in England. Dated 1940. Estimate \$400 - \$500. Sold for \$650.

English Wall Machine:

Bag the Pheasant. Re-painted glass. Dated 1940. Estimate \$200 - \$300. Sold for \$450.

'Old Mill' coin operated wall game:

Dated 1920. Made by Mutoscope, USA. Estimate \$1200 - \$1500. Sold for \$1900.

One Armed Bandit:

'Little Duke'. Dated 1934. Estimated \$1500 - \$2000. No sale price.

Gumball Machine:

Catalogue No 375. Dated 1930. This machine is coin operated. E-Z machine made from the Ad-Lee Co. USA. Estimate \$400 - \$800. Sold for \$650.

One Armed Bandit:

Catalogue No 374. Dated 1935. Coin operated slot machine. Star Brand, One Cent Machine. Estimated \$1000 - \$1500. Sold for \$900.

Electricity is Life:

Dated 1905. Simplex, minus paper and one handle. Estimate \$1000 - \$1500. Sold for \$7000.

Coin Operated Scales:

Catalogue No 391. Dated 1900. Made by Salter & Co., England. Sold through the Australian Automatic Weighing Co. Ltd. Estimate \$2000 - \$4000. Sold for \$2700.

Coin Operated Scales:

Catalogue No 392. Similar to above mentioned item. Estimate \$1000 - \$2000. Sold for \$1500.

The Mystery Box:

Dated 1940. A coin operated machine on stand. Bell Automatic Co. Restored. Estimate \$800 - \$1200. Sold for \$550.

Electric Shock Machine:

Dated 1910. Another coin operated machine was minus the back. Estimated value \$1200 - \$1800. Sold for \$2000.

Postage Stamp:

We are always on the look out for phonographs on stamps.

I came across this one in stamp exchange book.

Columbus Record:

This was copied from a Kurt Nauck catalogue. Banda Espanola. The catalogue says a rare Mexican double-sided record. Minimum bid US\$50.

Kansas City Talking machine:

This is a copy of an original letterhead which is dated by Loyd Davis (the sender) as January 20, 1899. He is interested in buying anything related to the Kansas City Talking Machine Company.

Diamond Disc Machines:

William and Mary.

The specifications below are taken from the George Frow book "The Edison Disc Phonographs and the Diamond Discs".

Model No: W-19 *Name:* WILLIAM AND MARY
(Official Laboratory Model)

Type: Half cabinet upright.

Introduction: (As W-250) April 1919.

Dimensions: Height 50^{3/8} in; width 20^{7/8} in; depth 22^{3/8} in.

Horn: No. 250.

Motor: Double spring.

Cabinet: In most respects the same as the W-250, but decoration was simplified in August 1919 and some beading omitted. Originally finished in walnut with later mahogany options, but mahogany moved to the principal finish with walnut as the option. Varnish finished from 1926. Cover locks to the cabinet were cut out from November 1920.

Grille Design: Wooden, rococo design as on the W-250. Grilles silk backed from December 1920, and the beading eliminated.

Record Storage: Cupboard with records stored vertically with metal dividers.

Cabinet Design: As the W-250.

Cost: \$285 in 1919; \$295 from December 1924.

UK price £120 in 1921, £95 in 1924.

History: The W-19 William and Mary Model was the continuation of the identical W-250, introduced in September 1917 as the second Official Laboratory Model. In April 1919 it was renumbered W-19, but model numbers were now discouraged from being used outside the Factory; in dealing with trade and customers the instrument would be referred to only as the William and Mary.

First Day Cover:

Kindly sent to us by Les Stenerson: See his letter for more information.

Jamaican Postage Stamp:

This stamp I collected in the same way as the Marconi stamp. This is a double current morse key 1870. Issued on the centenary of the introduction of the Telegraph service 1870 - 1970.

The Tin Foil Phonograph:

Loyd Davis says he took this picture in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, and kindly sent us a copy for our magazine.

1937 Coronation Record:

Illustration taken from Kurt and Diane Nauck's Record Auction Catalogue May 2003. HMV SCB-1 One side commemorates 1937 Coronation of George VI. Queen Elizabeth and children Elizabeth and Margaret - Rose. Minimum bid was US\$50.

Billy Vaughan:

Illustrations taken from two records - one when he was young. See article by Bryan Blanchard.

Fritz Kreisler Label:

Another unusual label, again taken from Kurt Nauck's auction catalogue. This is a speech made by Fritz on February 1st, 1950, on the eve of his 75th birthday. Was made at a dinner tendered to him at the 'Ritz Carlton'.

B. A. Blanchard:

There is an article elsewhere about Bryan, written by Rob Kerr.

George Frow and wife:

A nice photograph taken by your editor, of the Frow's when they visited me many years ago. For those who don't know, George spent a great part of his life devoted to the phonograph. His research was thorough, and he produced two excellent books on the Edison Cylinder Machines, and on the Edison Diamond Disc Machines. These books are both available, and are well worth obtaining.

The Phonograph

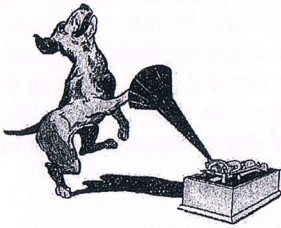


In 1877, a young man came into the office of the *Scientific American*, and placed before the editors a small, simple machine about which very few preliminary remarks were offered. The visitor without any ceremony whatever turned the crank, and to the astonishment of all present the machine said: "Good morning, How do you do? How do you like the phonograph?" The machine thus spoke for itself, and made known the fact that it was the phonograph, an instrument about which much was said and written, although little was known.

The young man was Edison, and the phonograph was his latest invention. The editors and employees of the *Scientific American* formed the first public audience to which it addressed itself.

Reprinted from "THE PHONOGRAM", FEBRUARY 1901

Printed each issue for those interested in Phones, Graphs, Grams and Devoted to the Arts of Reproducing Sound. (Part 16)



Q

Q is a QUADRUPED

Quaking with fear

At the sound of the music

So loud and so near.

A CLEVER QUADREPED

A little terrier belonging to A De Waal, proprietor of the Holland House, on chestnut Street, Nutley, made an hour's amusement for the guests of the hotel on Monday evening. A son of Mr De Waal was repairing a Phonograph and for convenience placed the machine on the floor. When nearly complete it was noticed that the dog was deeply interested in the proceedings, and walked around examining the Phonograph closely. At last his curiosity led him to place his head in the horn, and begin to sniff. Young De Waal suddenly turned on a tune and the pup jumped up and down, trembling and quaking with alarm. The machine was stopped, and the dog repeated his investigation, when the music was started up again. This time, however the dog did not jump back, but stood still, as though paralyzed. Again the music was stopped, but the dog did not move for a minute or two, and then deliberately walked up and placed one of his paws on the key, as though trying to start it up again. He was left to his own devices and accidentally started the tune. Then, to the amusement of those present, he started to jump, bark and roll over the floor in ecstasy, and from that time on for an hour made it apparent that he was pleased with the music.

From the Newark, N.J., Call.

126 New Windsor Road,
Avondale,
Auckland 1007.

Mr Walter T. Norris,
Editor, The Phonograph Record,
"Waipapa",
Swannanoa,
Rangiora. R.D. 1,
New Zealand.

Dear Walter

I have enclosed an article to add further information to the story in the last issue of The Phonograph Record regarding the Wagener Museum.

I have also enclosed a booklet that was issued by MOTAT some years ago regarding their Recorded Sound collection. This booklet was written by me. Also I have enclosed a photocopy of a first day cover of a letter commemorating the anniversary of the Edison phonograph. MOTAT was authorised by the N.Z. Post Office to issue the first day cover and was given a special stamp to cancel the postage stamp on these letters. Also enclosed is a photocopy of the insert which was in each of the first day covers.

You will see that there is a photo of some of my collection on the back page of the booklet and you may use this in the article if it copies satisfactorily. I want the booklet back when you have finished with it please.

My collection took up an area of about 100ft x 80ft which was in the basement area of the Aviation pavilion at MOTAT and now houses MOTAT's comprehensive library.

Yours sincerely
Les Stenersen

Further to THE HISTORY OF THE WAGENER MUSEUM

In 1977 I put on a display of Phonographs and Gramophones in the basement area of the new aviation pavilion at M.O.T.A.T (Museum of Transport and Technology) Auckland to celebrate the 100 years since the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison.

At the time I had 150 of my machines on display. We ran a competition with some excellent prizes and all the answers to the questions were somewhere on display in the museum, however even with the thousands of replies not one answered the question of who invented the first disc gramophone which of course was Emile Berliner.

Mr Wilf Wagener was on the Board of M.O.T.A.T and he visited my display. He said that if ever I wanted to sell some of my machines then he would be interested as he had ideas of opening a museum in the far north at Houhora on the family property. This was only an idea at the time.

Some years later I was offered the Wurlitzer organ which had been installed in the Regent Theatre in Auckland and I had put \$100 deposit on it to hold it. The Wurlitzer was in Wellington having been sold to the Hutt Valley High School in 1945 and during a fierce storm when the ferry Wahine had been driven onto the rocks in the Wellington harbour, the roof of the high school hall had been blown off and water had got into one chamber of the Wurlitzer. The school had sold the Wurlitzer to the highest offer and it was this person who now offered the Wurlitzer to me at the cost of \$10,000. As mentioned above I only put \$100 on the Wurlitzer which was all the money I had spare at the time but I remembered Mr Wagener's words that he might be interested in buying some of my collection and it was this that I was backing on but I could only loose \$100 if things did not work out. I was able to sell a few of my machines which netted me \$4000 and I needed a further \$6000 to be able to buy the Wurlitzer. I went to Mr Wagener's home and asked him if he was still interested in purchasing some of my collection which he stated he was because he had now set up the museum at Houhora. I set up 70 of my collection on and around our billiard table with the horns all pointing towards the person as they entered the room. Every machine was in perfect running condition and the display was striking. So I had no worries if Mr Wagener asked me to demonstrate any machine.

Mr Wagener entered the room and was rather taken back at the display of so many machines. He asked me what I wanted for the lot and I said that I would have to have \$6000 as I would need that for the purchase of the Wurlitzer Organ. Mr Wagener walked around the display carefully looking at every machine and under my breath I was saying "YES, YES, YES" and Mr Wagener came up to me and all he said was, "YES".

This is the true story of how the Wagener museum obtained its Phonograph and Gramophone collection. I attended the auction of the Wagener Museum Sale and I recognised many of the machines as those that I had sold to Mr Wagener in 1987.

Les Stenersen

22 Casuarina Rd
Ballina
NSW 2478

26 May 2004

Dear Walter

To the useful list of vintage music CD-selling Internet sites in the item by Gavin East in the latest newsletter, there should certainly be added:

www.berkshirerecordoutlet.com

The Berkshire Record Outlet is a major US retailer of remaindered CDs, and I have found their lists to include many, many historical reissues of both classical and popular material. And since they are a remainder outlet, their prices are often amazingly low. Also their systems for ordering and for delivery are excellent. Highly recommended!

Regards
Peter Bowler

RECORD COLLECTION A TREASURE CHEST

It's funny how seemingly inconsequential events can shape your life. Little things matter. Like when Bryan Blanchard's father gave him a wind-up gramophone and a box of old 78 records from Morton and Co. back in 1948.

Bryan kept the records he liked and sold the rest back to the auctioneers to make a profit - more than his Dad had originally spent.

But what did he buy? Records.

Fifty odd years and more than 100,000 records later, Bryan is still collecting. "There's nothing Ron (Ron Heney, Hospital FM station director) and I like better than rummaging through second-hand shops to fill a few spots."

Many of Bryan's records are news items, serials, comedies and speeches. He was even able to make up a tape for someone's funeral complete with rail songs and sound effects.

"That was unusual." His records are sorted by category and fill a double garage that has been divided into shelves. He controls the temperature and humidity to stop them from being damaged. Bryan sees the records as historic artifacts he is looking after and is willing to share.

Timaru once held Radio New Zealand's archives and when many records were being dumped, Bryan ended up saving them. He has never sold a record, but has given, swapped or exchanged them.

Bryan's Wednesday night "Yesterday's Radio" show on Hospital Radios (88.1 FM in town and 107.5 FM in Marchwiell) has a loyal following and is a mixture of serials, music, comedy and nostalgia. His Anzac programme last week played advertisements (plant your own vegetables for a victory garden), songs (*Hang up your washing on the Seigfried Line*), political speeches and comedy.

Every second Sunday he plays a morning show and from 9am to 10am he plays old children's stories like *Hop-a-long Cassidy* and *Bugs Bunny*, which still give him pleasure.

Half an hour of his show is played on Radio Foxton each week and in return they have sent him several boxes of records to look after.

In the 1970s he also received a lot of sample records, given to record companies, which were not released in New Zealand.

Bryan's wife Marian was philosophical when he added community radio to his other interests like running the cinema and promotions for the Pleasant Point Historical and Railway Society.

"At least the records are going to some use," she says.

His show may not have a huge audience but is important to his listeners. Cards, biscuits and a cake at Christmas and calls for requests or a chat prove the value of what he does.

Callers on 684 1487 never go live on-air unless they ask to. Bryan says if the show provides company for people, that's great.

He says a rapport develops. "Our listeners are our friends. You meet some really nice people. They are more than listeners."

The hours from 7pm to 10.30pm fly by. "I just love cueing records." Bryan's passion to collect even went as far as swapping illicit rock 'n' roll records and magazines for records from the Communist Bloc.

In the late 1950s, Western music was seen as decadent which of course made it all the more exciting for his pen pals Karl and Eva Bergmann. He recently met Karl's sister when she visited and was surprised how much pleasure the records had given.

28.4.04

By Rob Kerr

The Editor,
V.P.S Magazine

re Lex MacDonald - follows on from article 2003:

Add: Fine weather and a visit to Lex and Bertha's residence highlighted a trip to Dunedin. Born on April 29, 1917, Lex entered and won (twice) the Dunedin under 18 age competitions in the early 1930's as an early teenager singing as a boy treble. One of the judges Mr H Temple-White, hastily arranged a singing engagement for Lex with the Wellington Choral Society. Other concerts in Invercargill, Timaru and with the Christchurch Harmonic Society under Victor C Peters followed. With that sort of background, people started to ask, "Why don't you try and get your voice recorded"? Lex replied, "It wasn't possible here in 1932, but the Columbia Graphophone (AUST) company had just set up the Homebush studio in Sydney."

"Following negotiations with Sydney and some fundraising in Dunedin and grateful sponsorship from Cadbury Fry Hudson, we held a farewell concert on August 6 1932." Over 3000 turned up to hear the boy soprano, Mary Pratt (Alto), the local Choral Society, Ernest Drake's Choir, Ethel Wallace and several others, for the princely sum of two shillings.

Lex explained, "Our whole family went to Sydney and we stayed there for six weeks. We sailed from Wellington on the Maunganui and had letters of introduction to various people. I was asked to sing at the Conservatoire of Music where Mr Alfred Hill was Director of Music," said Lex. "I sang the first verse of the Grieg Solveig's Song (privately with him) and then he brought the staff in to sing the rest of the piece." Lex added, "With that sort of background and going to Columbia, it was immediately decided to offer my father a contract. As I was only 15 and away from form four at Otago Boys' High, it was quite an experience. I had to stand in all sorts of positions. It was quite arduous, for each song had to be done three times. I stood about six metres away from the upright microphone, otherwise the high notes impacted in some way," he said. "The Studios were spacious and it was a big job getting it right to record on the wax discs, 12 on 10 inch and two on 12 inch."

Naturally, the wish was to include Mendelssohn "Hear my Prayer" but as the motet had already been promoted by Ernest Lough (HMV C1329 of 15 March 1927), the request was declined. "However, with the 2FC Orchestra and Choir, I still sang its solos and it was also broadcast to New Zealand, but never recorded." Lex added, "On returning in late 1932, I went to Auckland to sing with the Society there under Mr Colin Muston. So that meant I'd sung for every Choral Society in the main centres," he said. "Then my tutor Mr Ernest Drake and my father formed a small

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\$10.00 TO \$25.00.

COLUMBIA MODEL

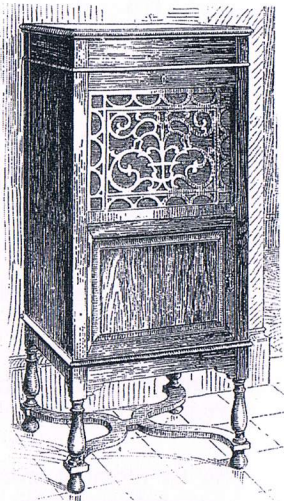
GRAPHOPHONE

Spring Motor, \$25.

Will run SIX Records to ONE Winding.
JANE CUMBUONE MAN AS

THIS GRAPHOPHONE HAS AS
ATTACHMENTS,

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 Recorder | 1 Reproducer |
| 1 Winding Crank | 1 Hearing Tube |
| 1 Speaking Tube | 1 Oak Carrying Case |



DIAMOND DISC MACHINE

WILLIAM AND MARY

Price, \$4.46

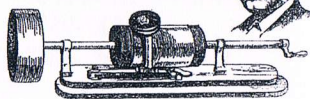
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE—27TH AUGUST 1977



Invention of the Phonograph

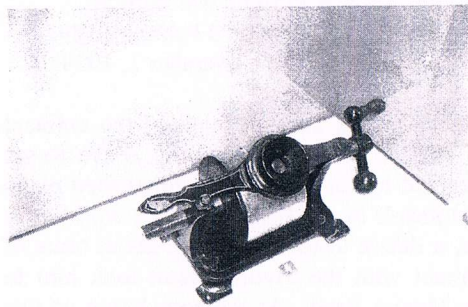
1877 - 100 YEARS - 1977

Centennial



The Museum of Transport & Technology of New Zealand (Inc.)
Western Springs, Auckland 2, New Zealand

FIRST DAY COVER



TIN FOIL PHONOGRAPH



Jamaican Postage Stamp



1937 Coronation Record

KURT NAUCK PHOTO

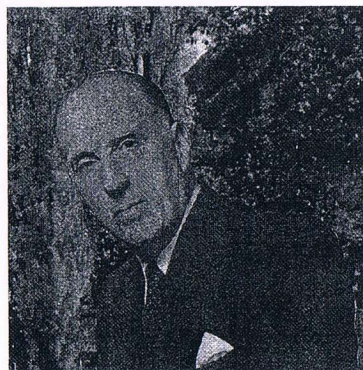
company and we toured throughout the South Island and then to the North, where on stage singing the Grieg at New Plymouth, my voice broke..!" But that wasn't the end of singing for Lex for he commenced as a bass in St Paul's Cathedral in 1940 for 17 years, and 25 years with the Returned Servicemen's Association Choir. When Lex MacDonald became 80 in 1997, he recorded a number of songs with Margaret Gardiner at the piano and heard over National YA's nostalgia evenings that November.

On asking Lex apart from his singing what is his greatest delight, he replied, "Being married to Bertha," he beamed.

Lex MacDonald has had his name added to the World Sopranist Register. This has been compiled by Mr Frank Edmonds of 78 York Street, Suite 179, LONDON, WIH 1DP. ENGLAND.

So far research reveals that Lex was the first boy treble from New Zealand to be recorded electrically on wax disc in Australasia.

Derek COCKBURN
February 9, 2004.



GIL DECH

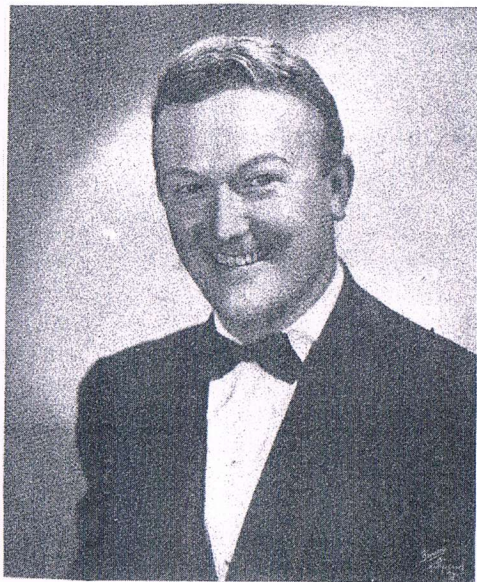
135 CLYDE ROAD, CHRISTCHURCH 5,
Ph 3517-939.
18 November 2003

THE MUSICIAN WHO LOST HIS NAME

Intro: He was a pianist, recording director and conductor.

Add: Gilbert Thomas Pinfield was born at Yardley, near Birmingham on 3 February 1897 and died in Wellington on November 1, 1974.

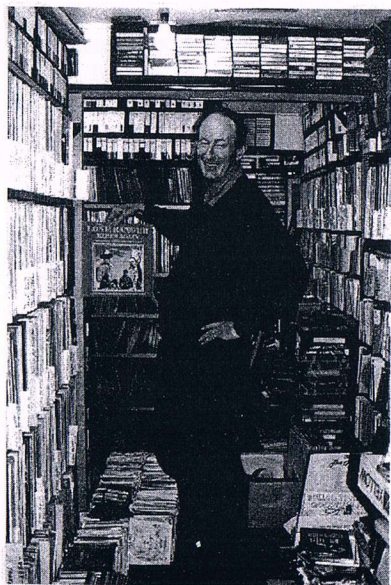
He began formal musical training when he was aged 10 as a pupil of the eminent concert pianist Irene Scharrer. In 1919 he studied piano and harmony at the Royal Academy of Music in London and then received tuition from the distinguished piano teacher Tobias Matthay. After establishing himself in the British concert world after taking the professional name of Dechelette, a desire to travel brought about tours of Holland and South Africa. In 1926 a contract with the Tivoli Circuit took him to Australia and New Zealand with the tenor Maxim Brodi. At the completion of this engagement in 1927, the Columbia Graphophone Company invited Gil to become director of music for the recording studio at Sydney. He made over 80 solo piano



BILLY VAUGHN



BLANCHARD PHOTO



B A Blanchard



KURT NAUCK PHOTO



George Frow & Wife

recordings and as well conducted dance bands, studio orchestras and countless accompaniments for many Australian and New Zealand singers.

As Dechelette was considered inappropriate for the more popular type of recordings being cut, the shortened version "Dech" was devised.

In 1930 Gil Dech spent three months in New Zealand directing recordings by the Rotorua Maori Choir. 150 waxes were taken, making history as the first large-scale recording session of Maori choral music in the country. Later, these became available on LP 10" MS 6001, MS 6003 and MS 6004 on Columbia Green. Inspired by its principal soloists Rotohiko Haupapa (bass-baritone), Tiawha Ratete (tenor), Te Mauri Meihana (soprano) and Mere Amohau (contralto), the choristers' favourites included Hymns, Maori Folk Songs, Love Ditties and Songs of Farewell. On DOX 234, a 12" Columbia 78, Gill Dech and his concert orchestra recorded a Maori Selection in the Ashfield Town Hall.

The early 1930's were taken up with concert tours as piano accompanist to the famous Gladys Moncrieff and the boy-treble from Dunedin, Lex MacDonald. Gil also worked as musical director for radio 2GB in Sydney. In March 1936, after an eight-month tour of NZ with Moncrieff, Dech resigned from Columbia and accepted employment with the New Zealand Broadcasting Board as musical supervisor and conductor of the 4YA concert orchestra in Dunedin. A year later was temporarily transferred to similar duties in Christchurch, but continued his association with Dunedin, returning to live and work there in October 1938. In each city, Gil Dech was an integral and important part of musical life and was greatly respected for his skills in recording and broadcasting techniques, performing, teaching and vocal coaching. Dech rarely missed the opportunity to accompany distinguished international artists during their appearances in New Zealand. In the Second World War he conducted or played solo piano in Auckland and Wellington at a number of celebrity orchestral concerts mounted for war charities. In 1946-7, he was associated with the formation of the National Orchestra, which he was to conduct in broadcast concerts. Gil Dech retired from regular musical life in 1964, but continued to play the piano until 1972 while living in Wellington. His background of sound musicianship combined with tact and a resolutely professional attitude, created a spirit of loyalty and enthusiasm among his players and students that helped raise performing standards to levels not previously attained.

Senior folk always associated Gil Dech with his version of Carl Reber's piano solo Remembrance on RZ 10" G21186, made in Sydney on 28th October 1931. The reverse side is titled Moonlight on the Danube (Theodore Muller) and Gil takes you and I there with fond memories. Play it again.....

Derek COCKBURN. P.S. The above article is linked to the Lex Macdonald boy treble, with correction 18 November 2003 of Lex's birthdate now confirmed as 29 April 1917.

Billy Vaughan & His Orchestra 1919-1991

Billy Vaughan came along at exactly the wrong time. Yet his band proved providential. Dance bands were going into decline during the 50's. Rock was taking over, guitars were becoming more popular than sweet sax sounds. But Richard 'Billy' Vaughan opted to buck the trend. And he possessed enough know-how to make his theory work. He'd been around for years, knew pop music inside out. The man from Glasgow, Kentucky, started out as pianist with a dance band. He was working with Ave Dinning's band in Bowling Green, Kentucky, when in 1952, he met up with three students from the nearby State College who'd formed a vocal group.

A budding songwriter, Billy shaped a song called *Trying* that he felt would suit the voice of the group's lead singer, Jimmy Sacca. More importantly, he also became a member of the group, providing the baritone part they were missing. Dot Records knew a good thing when they heard one. They signed the group, who adopted the name The Hilltoppers, (the nickname of the school athletic team) and found themselves on the Ed Sullivan show the same week that the record broke big.

The link with Dot saw Vaughan expanding into various areas of music. Within two years, while still part of the Hilltoppers, he was heading his first band on the label. His first hit came with *Melody of Love*, which reached second spot in the US charts during late 1954. Two years later he was Dot's musical director, leading the Orchestra on such chart records as Gale Storm's *I Hear You Knockin'* - and the Fountains Sisters' *Hearts of Stone*, plus many of Pat Boone's biggest successes.

Meanwhile, Billy had become a star in his own right, *The Shifting Whispering Sands*, a 1955 release that featured a narration by the rich-voiced Ken Nordine, again giving him a foothold in the US Top 10. The band-leader was confident that he would continue to sell to what seemed to be a disappearing audience, and his sales figures over the next decade or so, proved that such self-belief was well founded. He became the biggest selling orchestra leader of the rock and roll era, notching 28 chart singles, while 36 of his recordings entered the US album listings between 1958 and 1970, including six Top 10 titles.

Billy Vaughan's greatest recordings, many of them featuring the famous twin saxophone sound that became a Vaughan trademark. Such was the bandleader's popularity that, though he constantly covered hits made by other artists, his version often charted alongside the originals. When Garry Mills *Reach for a Star* clambered into the US Top 20 during 1960, Billy Vaughan's recording was there to keep it company. And though Bill Justis' rock hit *Raunchy* headed into the Top 10, so too did Billy's cover shot. Record buyers loved the Vaughan orchestral sound. It mattered little what kind of music he chose to personalise, if the disc had the Billy Vaughan name on it, then that equated with the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

Often the Vaughan version received so much airplay and sold so well that it was believed that he was actually the originator of certain tunes. Certainly his involvement with *The Shifting Whispering Sands* was such that few now recall that it was Rusty Draper who first recorded it. Ken Nordine, the narrator on the record, later recalled that, 'it was originally written by a Southern Illinois minister about a sidewinder, a snake running through the shifting whispering sands.' *A Swingin' Safari* was a European hit for Bert Kaempfert, that Billy re-shaped for an American audience. *Melody of Love* stemmed from the French hit *Melodie d'Amour*. Huge in the USA, the song became a Top 30 record for the Four Aces, David Carroll, Frank Sinatra with Ray Anthony, and Leo Diamond. But none of these versions outsold Billy Vaughan's. When Billy covered a tune, it stayed covered.

Somehow, Billy had the common touch, that certain something that made the family man head into record shops to buy the latest Vaughan recording. It was something he had demonstrated early on in his days at Dot Records. Fats Domino may well have made the best recording of *Ain't That a Shame* - but it was Pat Boone's cover, masterminded by Billy Vaughan, that went to No 1.

It was a trait that was to remain with Billy right through the 50's and 60's. Even when he ventured into the field of Bluegrass with *Orange Blossom Special*, somehow he managed to sell his creation to a mass audience. Such popularity couldn't last forever. Nothing does. By the late 60's, despite various attempts to change his sound, heading sometimes into Glenn Miller territory or maybe providing a nod in the direction of Ray Conniff, it was all over for Billy Vaughan in terms of US chart records. But there were compensations. For, as Billy's popularity faded in his own country, it belatedly grew in Germany and Japan, where he undertook several tours before retiring.

A king of easy listening, Billy Vaughan finally abdicated when cancer claimed him as a victim, and he died, age 72, in September, 1991, in Escondido, California.

Glenn Matthews

Editors Note: Billy's 'Dot' label orchestra was a recording-only band and never performed in public. He put out many recordings on the Hollywood based 'Dot' label during the 1950's and 1960's and some of his popular releases included Berlin Melody - Sail Along Silvery Moon - La Paloma - He'll Have to Go - Wheels - Come September - Blue Hawaii - Moonlight and Roses - Somewhere, My Love - Theme from a Summer Place - Morgen - Lili Marlene - Tracy's Theme - True Love - Moritat - Estrellita - and the list goes on.

Part 1: Music on a Roll

In 1914 the player piano was the last word. "Do not merely hope for increased happiness in the year that is before you," said the advertisement in the *Sphere* on January 17, 1914, "ensure it by purchasing a Pianola Piano. There is no other investment you can make which will so surely bring pleasure to you and every member of your household, for by its means everyone can play the music they love. Day in, day out, through many a year, the influence of the world's sweetest music will brighten and cheer you through the dull routine of life."

The ad is illustrated with a picture of bright young things tearing up that dull routine at a musical soiree - gents in dickies raising their glasses in salute, ladies in Edwardian bows draping themselves around the keyboard. In the centre of the image is a woman sitting on the piano stool, head tilted and eyes closed in proper appreciation of a tune whose name will forever remain a mystery. Her fingers are outstretched before the keys but they will never descend upon them.

The Pianola Piano consisted of a player-piano mechanism fitted to a Steinway, Weber, Steck or Stroud piano. In 1914 you could buy it from the Orchestrelle Company in New Bond Street, London. Sadly its price is not mentioned. The Orchestrelle Company was not the only player piano-making outfit in London. A 1922 trade directory listed 52 makers in London alone. In 1900 some 171,000 pianos were made and 6,000 player pianos; in 1924 the high-water mark for automated joannas, more player pianos than ordinary ones were made - 169,000 compared with 136,000. There were coin-operated ones for cafes, restaurants and hotels, and many more sold to often musically unskilled people for home entertainment. It was the depression that began in 1929, radio and the advent of sound recording that did for these instruments as market leaders, but even now a handful are made each year. There is even a shop near Cambridge, in Britain, that sells them.

What is a player piano? According to the *Grove Dictionary* "a piano fitted with a self-playing mechanism, normally pneumatic, capable of playing from a perforated paper music roll." The precursor of this was the 18th-century barrel piano. Later player pianos consisted of a cabinet containing a pneumatic mechanism that was pushed in front of an ordinary piano. A row of felt-covered wooden fingers rested on the keyboard, and inside the cabinet a music roll passed over a tracker bar with 88 slots, one for each note. When a perforation in the moving roll uncovered a slot in the bar, suction would draw the air through the port, forcing the wooden finger down. The suction was generated by foot treadles. Later this mechanism was built into the piano.

Originally, piano rolls were made by hand-punching in a roll to correspond to sheet music. By 1912, however, pianists would mark or perforate the roll as they performed. This revolutionised the medium because it gave a fairly accurate representation of the player's style.

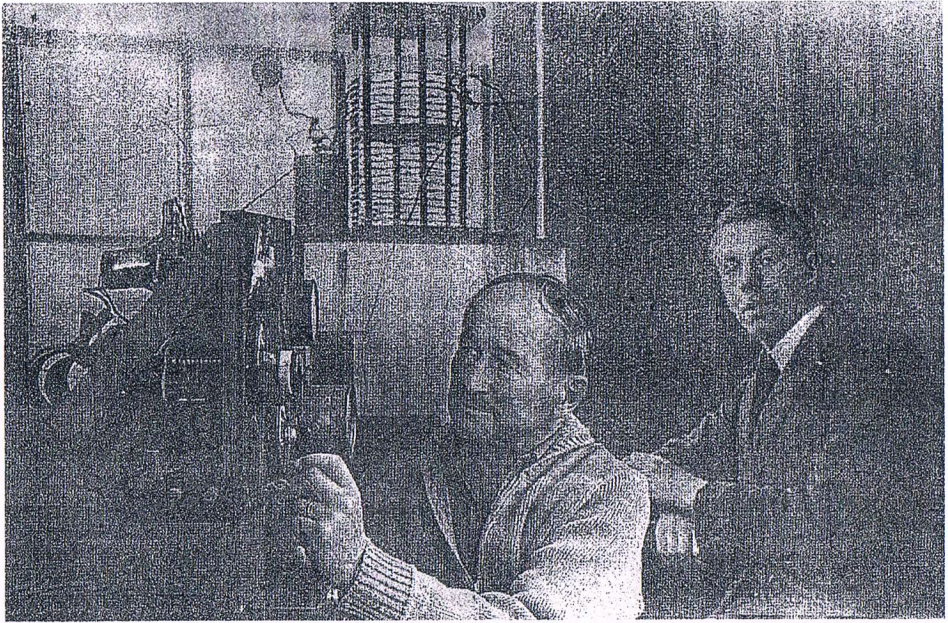


PHOTO: OTAGO DAILY TIMES

Bill Bailey looks over the historic transmitter used to make the first two-way radio contact between New Zealand and the United Kingdom. A photograph of Cecil Goyder, who was on the London end of the communication, can be seen in the background.

Broadcast marked, and Bell came in clear

The 70th anniversary of the first two-way radio communication between New Zealand and Britain was marked in Dunedin yesterday.

The "trans-world" broadcasting feat was achieved on October 18, 1924, by a young Otago farmer, Frank Bell, broadcasting from his family farm at Shag Valley, near Palmerston, and Cecil Goyder, about 17, a senior pupil at the Mill Hill school in London.

Bill Collett, of Dunedin, a former president of the New Zealand Association of Radio Transmitters, said the goal of two-way radio communication with England had been the "holy grail" of Otago amateur radio operators of the early 1920s.

It was regarded as the ultimate test of radio communication, given England's place at virtually the farthest point of the globe from New Zealand.

The association's Otago branch president, Bill Bailey, said that after Mr Bell's death the branch officially adopted his Z4AA call sign, and several Otago ham operators yesterday used the call sign to undertake several international broadcasts to mark the 1924 feat. The transmission has become part of New Zealand, British, and world ham radio legend.

Guglielmo Marconi

Radio Review - ODT 9 January 2002

By Clarke Isaacs

The centenary of the first wireless transmission by Guglielmo Marconi in December 1901, was marked by a spectacular Australian Broadcasting Corporation documentary, *The Great Marconigram*, almost two hours long, which travelled many a radio highway and byway.

Marconi established himself as the father of radio transmission by successfully sending a signal across the Atlantic Ocean from Poldhu, Cornwall, to St John's, Newfoundland, a distance of 3380km, thus proving that wireless waves were not affected by the curvature of the Earth.

The 27-year-old Italian inventor, receiving at St John's a message tapped out in Morse code from Poldhu, had finally confounded the skeptics who had sneered at his attempts at wireless transmission.

Morse code was invented in 1838 and telegraph messages had long been travelling across land by wire. What Marconi proved was that radio waves could carry messages anywhere without wire.

This programme, adeptly presented by Tony Baldwin, was constantly bombarded by all manner of weird and wonderful sounds, the better to emphasise that radio can deliver limitless amounts of arcane intelligence to reward the listener's ear.

As Baldwin pointed out, for decades people listened to the wireless in family groups. He reckoned the golden age of radio lasted three decades. "Radio did everything we expect of television now - coronations, disasters, wars, sport, advertising, plays, music, comedy, nature. Some things television still can't get right, like cricket commentary," he observed.

No wide-ranging radio documentary like *The Great Marconigram* would be complete without reference to magnificent actor Orson Welles who, in 1938, scared the living daylights out of listeners in New York with his dramatisation of *The War of the Worlds*, broadcast on the CBS network.

People who tuned in after the opening announcement thought it was the real thing. Believing Martians really had landed in New Jersey, they fled their homes in panic. Such was the power of the wireless in the 1930s.

And we heard too, of course, the anguished voice of Herb Morrison, a reporter for Chicago's WLS radio, giving an eye-witness report of the German airship Hindenberg,

exploding in a ball of flame as it came in to land in New Jersey on May 6, 1937, making a fiery grave for 35 passengers and crew. Morrison, in tears, told his audience of "smoke and flames, and oh, the humanity..."

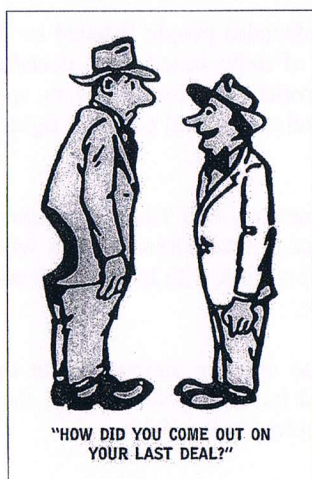
We were reminded that radio has a power that can be perverted. The Nazis' propaganda minister, Goebbels, loved that power. And in the really bad dark days of World War 2 from 1940 to 1942 there were serious thoughts in the United Kingdom about the possibility of jamming or getting off the airwaves British traitor James Joyce ("Lord Haw-Haw"), whose broadcasts in an upper-class drawl from Radio Hamburg in Germany were definitely undermining morale.

But the programme pointed out that the people who really first had the idea of making international use of the broadcasting were ironically enough the Russians. Soon after the revolution, Lenin himself developed inside Russia a system which would give the international impetus to the international proletariat message.

"To all, to all, to all" were the words the Russians used to put out at the beginning of their signals which, in the first instance, were telegraph. But they developed an international radio service as early as 1925. The Germans overtook them in the 1930s.

One of the radio's lowest moments came in 1994 when Rwandans were told to go out and murder their neighbours. As many as a million people might have been murdered in the Rwandan massacres. It was a time when radio was known as "the messenger of death".

It was suggested in *The Great Marconigram* that radio in many ways is gaining more currency, because people find they can listen to it while they're doing visual things. Many will listen while they're working on a computer or other bits of technology.



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