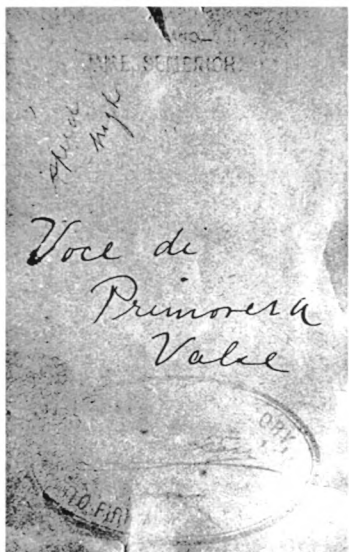


# THE G & T GAZETTE Vol. 7 No. 3



Above: The 5 inch brown wax Bettini cylinder and paper slip. Below left: The paper slip with a faint "Soprano Mme Sembrich" rubber stamped (top). Below right: The David Graves two colour label label design.(blue & black).

As I look back on my interest in collecting records from the past, my involvement with the Marcella Sembrich Bettini re-issue in 1964 stands supreme.

It all began in 1963 when Charlie Lindsay of the Dominion Museum, Fred Spencer and Michael Woolf supported an idea I had to call a conference of Phonograph and Record Collectors in Wellington over Labour Day Weekend 26th - 28th October. It was here we met a number of South Island collectors who reciprocated by calling another convention the following year in Christchurch. I appeared on their programme and gave a talk on how Walter Norris, Michael Woolf, David Graves and myself went about the task of creating *Primo Records*. Earlier in 1964, Michael and I with David Graves went to Walter's farm at Swannanoa, Rangiora to make a tape recording of his five inch Bettini cylinder. We caught the overnight Ferry and lugged the contraption I'd devised and nick named the 'Alvaphone' plus a Ferrograph open reel Tape Recorder which I'd wired to take a jack plug from the pick-up leads. Once installed, we recorded the cylinder by turning the rpm adjustment knob on the 'Alvaphone' until it sounded more or less right. Later through Michael's contact in Broadcasting House we had a session with a variable speed tape recorder and tuned it to Sembrich's 1903 Columbia recording.

Then it was out to Lower Hutt where HMV pressed a total of 450 copies, the bulk of which were sold in America for \$1 each. Sales in the U.K. and Australia made up the rest with about 10% of the pressings going locally for 7/6 each. The total outlay for the whole project was £129 19s 0d which returned us a profit of £45 3s 0d. This was split three ways between Walter Norris, Michael Woolf and myself. If it hadn't been for William (Bill) Moran's influence in America, I doubt whether we would have cleared costs. He paved the way for reviews in *High Fidelity* (August 1965), *Hobbies* (October 1965) and *The American Record Guide* (August 1965). From these we moved just on half the pressings. James Dennis in Ipswich saw to it that the *Gramophone* and *Opera* received copies for review with Desmond Shawe-Taylor doing us proud in the last mentioned (May 1966). The cream on all this was the *Gramophone* critic John Freestone who voted it his first choice for 1965. He wrote...

"This has been a comparatively poor year as far as historical records are concerned. It is amazing that such artists as Calvé, Amato and above all Destinn have been almost totally neglected so far as England is concerned. However, we must be thankful for such interesting records as the Sembrich re-recording from a Bettini cylinder, which is an outstanding historical document, despite the annoying 'wow' of the piano and the generally primitive quality of the sound. This is my first choice (Primo P1001-7inch 45 rpm from J. Dennis, The Collector Shop, 61 Fore Street, Ipswich, Suffolk)".

The G&T Gazette is published as time permits and distributed gratis to friends and associates who attend or share in the interests of a group known as "The Scratchy Record Group". Opinions expressed in the Gazette are those of the authors and do not represent the philosophies and beliefs of the SRG. Unsolicited material is welcome. Care with submissions for publication will be exercised, but no responsibility for loss or damage in transit will be accepted. Advertising rates are negotiable. The G&T Gazette is produced on a Macintosh G3 and Agfa studio scanner. All material is copyrighted. Permission to use anything appearing in the Gazette must be cleared in the first instance with the editor William (Bill) Main at 93 Burma Road, Wellington. 6004 New Zealand, telephone (04)971-3535, email wmain@paradise.net.nz

## PROGRAMME NOTES COMPILED FOR A MEETING OF THE SCRATCHY RECORD GROUP AT 93 BURMA ROAD, 19th AUGUST 2001, MADE UP FROM RECORDINGS SELECTED FROM THE RAYMOND HEDGES COLLECTION

**RICHARD BONELLI** - baritone 1889-1980

Mah Lindy Lou (Strickland) with orchestra. Brunswick 13027 matrix 6160 recorded 1920-1925

William R. Moran in programme notes that accompanied the Richard Bonelli 2 disc *Delos* CD set in 1997 states that Bonelli disliked making commercial recordings because he did not like the idea of having his recorded repertory dictated to him. While that might have been the case with his Brunswick contract in the 1920s which centred on songs and ballads, this *Delos* compilation puts his taste in music on show with recordings that came from Bonelli's own library.

When I received my copy of the *Delos* set I was curious to listen and learn more about Bonelli's voice and artistic achievements. What I heard was a beautifully rounded voice eminently capable of handling all the operatic roles that had been created for a baritone. The bulk of these CD selections were made from radio broadcasts. The second disc which was recorded on February 5th 1947, came from a recital at the New York Town Hall with Ernst Victor Wolff at the piano. Here were brackets from Handel, German lieder, French, English and American songs and ballads, a total of 25 items which surely must have had his audience begging respite. In this respect, he must have backed himself to engage an audience with songs that gave reign to his interpretive powers on the concert platform.

I found much to admire in this second disc because versions of *Eri tu* or *Di provenza il mar* or arias from the standard Verdi repertoire is a that which that leaves me for dead and I try to avoid when presenting evenings like this. In this instance I'm going to favour a song like *Mah Lindy Lou* which I recall was also recorded by Paul Robeson. It's a beautiful melody with matching lyrics.

The composer Lily Teresa Strickland 1887 - [?] composed three operas, a symphonic suite based on Negro themes and more than 75 songs.

**OWEN BRANNIGAN** - Bass 1908 - [?]

Palatine's\* Daughter - (arr. Herbert Hughes) with accompaniment by Gerald Moore - HMV B10252 matrix OEA1629 recorded 1952.

W. A. Chislett in the *Gramophone* of June 1952 had this to say about this particular record. "Despite his Welsh Christian name and Northumbrian birth, Brannigan is of Irish descent. What a pleasure it is to listen to a singer who can cover a couple of octaves or more with good tone throughout and with the command of colour that he has".

A pupil of the Guildhall School of Music Brannigan made his debut in 1943 in the role of Sarastro in Mozart's *Magic Flute* while on tour with Sadlers Wells in Birmingham. He went on to create roles in several Benjamin Britten operas. I first came into contact with Brannigan's voice through the Decca set of the *Messiah*. This was my father's who had a great appreciation of singers like Kathleen Ferrier. Being a Scot, he also held in high regard the Glasgow Orpheus Choir that was conducted by Hugh Robertson. When Andrew Porter was given the task of reviewing the Decca *Messiah* along with three

other versions by HMV, Columbia and Nixa in May 1954, he came down heavily in favour of Brannigan. Conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, it was interesting to note that there is a Concert Hall named after him in Birmingham which I saw on my recent trip overseas.

If Ray had had a copy of Brannigan's Blaydon Races, then I think I would have played it in preference to Palatine's Daughter. However that's not to be. The song which explains itself has what I'd call a clickity-clack chorus of Northumbrian nonsense words. Herbert Hughes who arranged this song, is one of my favourite composers. You'll hear another Hughes folk song tonight with Margaret Sheridan.

\*Palatine = title for an individual who rules a feudal territory.

**ROSINA BUCKMAN** - Soprano 1883 - 1948

On Wings of Song (Mendelssohn) with orchestra HMV test pressing matrix CC822 recorded in 1922.

There are a number of reasons why this recording might be given star treatment on tonight's programme. First, it's by a soprano who is well known to all of us. Secondly, it came to Ray's collection through Rosina Morrison, a niece who spent some time with Buckman in London shortly before she died in 1948. Rosina is the wife of George Morrison, a singing teacher who still gives singing lessons in Hataitai. George and Ray were of course, involved in many productions together when Ray had his theatre in Aro Street.

Besides this unpublished take of On Wings of Song, Ray's collection contained a total of 31 Buckman recordings on single and double sided discs by Columbia and HMV, some with Head Office rubber stamps on the label. Unfortunately, I don't have a copy of the published version. If I did, I don't think a direct comparison would reveal anything exceptional to write home about. It was a policy among recordings companies to have at least two acceptable takes on hand in case something happened to the first version as it was processed and put into production.

**ERIC COATES** 1886 - 1957 Composer/Conductor

I Pitch My Lonely Caravan (Coates) Walter Glynne - tenor with Orchestra conducted by the composer. Columbia DOX-365 matrix AX6746 recorded 1933.

"Coates is an adept and charming composer of light orchestral music of a programmatic nature. He has also written numerous songs". So wrote the *Gramophone Shop Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music*, Simon & Shuster - 1942, a publication which took pains to list all the Coates records they had on file. Not so with Clough and Cuming's *The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music* which came out ten years later. They obviously took a more serious attitude towards music and even declined to list the Savoy Operas of Gilbert and Sullivan.

It is with gratitude I praise the Simon & Shuster publication because it's they who identify the tenor Walter Glynne. The Australian pressing which was located in Ray's collection leaves off any mention of the vocalist.

Coates first made his name with The Knightsbridge March, which was chosen over others to introduce the BBC pre-WWII programme *In Town To-night*. Other compositions which won him fame were, Sleepy Lagoon, Calling All Workers and Bird Songs at Eventide. I can remember investing in a ten inch LP of his in the mid 1950s which featured his Three Bears Suite, which has remained a favourite of mine. There has been something of a revival in Coates music on the radio. I have caught the Concert Pro-

gramme playing quite a few of his compositions in the dinner hour slot.

<sup>PIH/FIELD</sup>  
**GIL DECH** - Pianist/Conductor 1897 - 1974

The Toymakers Dream (Golden) Gill Dech and his Syncopators with vocal by Len Maurice. Columbia 01686 matrix WT798 recorded in 1929.

<sup>80</sup>  
<sup>3000</sup> This record was one of the last to be discovered in Ray's Wallace Street property (it was in the garden shed!). Despite it's cobweb origins, it's a real treasure for me because the packet bears a signed inscription "Please do not damage - Property of Gill Dech", in red ball point pen.

When you begin to weigh up the business of scheduling a session for a popular ditty like this and take into consideration the problems it may have afforded people like Columbia's A&R man Gil Dech in obtaining scores for his musicians, we might well wonder was it worth the trouble. Perhaps Columbia's head office was able to help, or was someone required to sit down and write them out by hand? Perhaps there was an agent in Sydney representing a music publishers interests who had access to scores on a lease basis. This is an area about which I know very little.

A point to note in this item are the sound effects which seem to have taken on greatly after the introduction of electrical recording.

**NELSON EDDY** - Baritone 1901 - 1967

Kashmiri Song - Four Indian Love Lyrics - Woodforde-Finden with orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Finston. Columbia LB59 matrix wco 26012 released in the UK 1948.

Best remembered for his 1930s films with Jeanette McDonald, it came as a pleasant surprise to find this record in Ray's collection. I was even further surprised to find a listing of Nelson Eddy in Kutsch/Riemens *A Concise Biographical Dictionary of Singers*.

An exhaustive search through the *Gramophone* failed to unearth any mention of this record so I am unable to date it more accurately. A more surprising omission in my mind is lack of mention of songs by Woodforde-Finden in the *World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music* - WERM.

I have three versions of this song. They are by Dame Clara Butt, Alfred Piccaver and Maggie Teyte (Edison). Technically there is nothing too difficult about this song. The least impressive of these is the Butt whose gear changes and exaggerated emphasis on some of the phrases makes it an ordeal to listen to. The Piccaver possesses a lovely recorded sound but his mannerisms are hard to tolerate. Teyte, on the other hand, sings it simply and sustains a steady melodic line. Unfortunately, the sound quality is not up to much but she comes nearest to toppling Eddy's version.

I gained the release date through the duty tax stamp stuck on the label - Thank you Adam!

**IVAN KOSLOVSKY** - Tenor 1900 - 1993

Song Of The Steppes (arr. Triodin) with the Osipov Folk Instruments Orchestra. Columbia DO 2606 matrix 10845 recorded in 1941.

I had never anticipated finding any Russian 78s in Ray's collection, a gap which he bridged in later years by acquiring many LPs.

Through the good offices of the *Record Collector*, I was able to trace this entry as no.85 in the discography where it was listed under 'Steppe Is All Around'. I imagine this got pressed in Australia as a patriotic gesture during WWII. The reverse has a swingtime light orchestra and an unnamed male vocalist performing the Victory March! Song of the Steppes ends with Koslovsky sustaining a long note to finish the recording.

## INTERMISSION

**MARJORIE LAWRENCE** - Soprano/Mezzo 1909 - 1978

Waltzing Matilda (Cowan) with piano accompaniment by Raymond Lambert. Columbia LO 67 matrix Ct2184 recorded 1944 in Sydney.

This represents my first Marjorie Lawrence record in my collection. For a collector who is just getting to grips with Joan Hammond, I admit I've been rather lax on ladies from across the ditch. My error in this department is now being rectified by absorbing recordings from Ray's collection.

Born near Melbourne, Lawrence's international career took off in France. Appearances at the Metropolitan and Covent Garden followed until in Mexico she contracted poliomyelitis in 1941. She fought back from this paralysing disease and returned to the stage with a voice that was more centred on the Mezzo range.

In 1949 she published her memoirs under the title *Interrupted Melody, the Story of My Life*. In turn this was made into a film called *Interrupted Melody*.

While people like football supporters who sing it with great patriotism to such an extent that it's sort of become an unofficial national anthem, Lawrence's war time version was probably aimed more as a gesture to bolster spirits during the war. As such it is performed without any histrionics, making it more suited to the concert platform than the fields of sporting endeavour.

**LOTTE LEHMANN** - Soprano 1888 -1976

An Die Musik (Schubert) with piano accompaniment by Paul Ulanowsky. Pelican LP 2009 Recorded on the 16th February 1951 in New York.

Ray's collection possessed many records by Lotte Lehmann, from her early Polydors to this version of *An Die Musik* which was made during her final recital. As a result of his preferences, I availed myself of many titles, adding them to the dozen or so I'd already acquired, including her 10 inch Parlophone 78rpm album of *Frauenlieder und Leben* with instrumental accompaniment. Oddly enough, I've grown very partial to this way of listening to this particular song cycle, with its palm court ensemble. Of the 37 titles I now possess, all but 10 of these came from Ray's collection.

I admit I have been very late coming to recognise Lehmann's genius. Her interpretations of all the Schubert and Schumann songs are glowing testaments to her artistry. Since then, I've certainly made amends. Actually, I began to regret not having acquired more of her recordings when years ago I heard the Concert Programme play tapes of her master class sessions in America.

The programme notes on the back of this LP state... "The circumstances under which the recording was made were not ideal, but one can sense an unmistakable electricity and immediacy of the artist/audience relationship. Though she was soon to have her 63rd birthday, Lotte Lehmann's voice sounds fresh and glorious throughout the recital. Overcome by emotion when she reached the last poignant line in the encore *An Die Musik*, 'du holde Kunst, ich danke dir' - (thou noble art I thank you) she was unable to finish it, and covering her tear filled eyes, Lotte Lehmann swept from the Town Hall stage for the last time".

**ERNEST MCKINLAY** - tenor 1889 -1945

Song of the Locust (Alfred Hill) with Piano by Gilbert Dechelette Columbia 01061 ma-

trix 1585 recorded Sydney 1927/8.

Ray's collection contained five McKinlay recordings. Prior to this I'd acquired a recording which I think I included in one of my programmes a couple of years ago. What attracted me to McKinlay's offerings in this instance were his obvious preference for Maori songs by Alfred Hill, one of which I include in tonight's presentation.

A light lyric tenor, his voice is not one you'd go to the ends of the earth to hear. Yet by association, i.e. a New Zealand artist singing a New Zealand composer's song, this should have great appeal for those who begin to examine the direction we follow when we acquire old recordings.

Posted to France in the first world war, he drifted into a concert party which was formed out of his unit to entertain the troops. As Pierrots, this Kiwi concert party did much to enliven the tedium and horror of trench warfare. At the end of hostilities in 1918, his unit became part of the occupation forces sent to Cologne. After his discharge, he spent some time in London where he underwent tuition from the eminent singer Harry Plunket Green and the Guildhall School of Music.

Returning to Dunedin, his career was put on hold by chest pains and a well meaning but misguided medical practitioner announced he would never sing again. Convalescing in Auckland he became interested in Maori songs. The beauty of these melodies intrigued him and he decided he would study and collect them, singing them in concerts and eventually recording them in the 1920s.

In 1922 he moved to Sydney and improved his health sufficiently to be contracted by the Westminster Glee Singers who gave concerts in countries all round the world. He returned to Sydney and although he sang less frequently he continued to give concerts and to make solo appearances with various choral societies.

He died in 1945 at the age of fifty-six.

*References:* Peter Downes 1979 book *Top of the Bill* 1979 Reed.

**GLADYS MONCRIEFF** - Soprano 1892 - 1976

Love Will Find A Way *Maid of the Mountains* (Fraser-Simpson), transferred from Vocalion S 102 to Discovery DE 001, Recorded 1926 in London.

Doing a programme based on the records which Ray accumulated without including an example by Gladys Moncrieff is tantamount to baking a loaf of bread without yeast!

I lost count of the number of records Ray had by her. Most it seems went swiftly when I first asked you all to come and buy. The Moncrieff LP sets I sampled didn't come up expectations because they didn't include her Vocalions. It was with great relief I finally found one which did attempt to put things right.

This turned out to be a rather peculiar 7 inch 33 & 1/3 rpm disc from the Discovery Stage Door series. Does anyone know anything about this company? Nicely packaged, it contains four tracks made by Gladys in London 1926. According to the blurb on the jacket, Discovery also had plans to do similar treatments on Ada Reeves, Billy Williams, Dorothy Brunton, Albert Whelan, Florrie Forde and Harry Lauder. In the credits for this particular disc, which acknowledges assistance from the Decca Recording Company in London, the transfers were made by David Cullinane, while Frank Van Straten, who will be familiar to some in our group, compiled the research notes.

Despite Ray's proclaimed adoration for Gladys, I found little beyond the recordings to bear this out. A solitary postcard and many programmes, but no scrapbooks, letters or reviews. Perhaps he had already passed these onto someone. He'd assiduously marked the records, 78s & LPs against the discography in her autobiography *My Life of Song*,

proof indeed that he was infatuated by her lovely voice and personality.

**GABRIELLE PHILLIPS** - Soprano

Willow Song (Shakespeare-Lilburn) piano accompaniment by Pauline de Schryver. Tanza CL 1 matrix CL 1/1. Recorded in 1951 as part of the Tanza company 'New Zealand Composer' - Limited Edition series.

Although I have managed to track down the pianist Pauline de Schryver who now teaches music on the outskirts of Brisbane, her recollections are somewhat dim. She writes... "Douglas Lilburn was present during the recording and gave careful attention to balance between voice and piano. As well he was particular about the accuracy of the rhythms and what he wrote was exactly what he expected ... Both Gabrielle and I were taught in Wellington by Agnes Wright who still lives in her house in Hataitai. Days in London followed. Gabrielle went to either the Royal College of the Royal Academy of Music; I studied privately with Ruth Bridburg, a leading student of Solomon. Would that I could tell you more about Gabrielle".

The music for Willow Song, "A poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree, sing all a green willow", Desdemona's song from Othello Act 4, was originally part of the incidental music to a Ngaio March production. A guitar arrangement of it by David Farquhar is published by Waiteata Music Press.

**VASA PRIHODA** - violinist 1900 - [?]

Waltz (Dvorak) arr. by Prihoda with piano accompaniment by Charles Cerné. Polydor 62567 matrix 124bh recorded 1926/7.

Born in Bohemia, this Czech violinist toured extensively in Europe and America and added to the violin's repertoire by composing arrangements of melodies by other composers, as in this instance. He sadly earned the displeasure of the *Gramophone* critic C. Henry Warren in February 1931, who complained of Prihoda's propensity for recording Kreisler compositions. He yearned for something more substantial to judge him on!

I fell in love with this melody thanks to the Concert Programme who seems to have latched onto it for fill-ins by a variety of performers. Sadly, my violin teacher Zillah Castle never introduced me to this although I do recall she did let me loose on at least one Dvorak number. From memory I think it was Humoresque.

What a joy it was to discover this in Ray's collection.

**ROSA RAISA** - soprano 1893 - 1963

La Paloma (Yradier) with orchestral accompaniment. Vocalion A-0201 matrix N 10996. Recorded 1920 - 1924.

I can't ever recall hearing anyone else other than Emilio de Gogorza singing this at one of our sessions. As I study the translation, his treatment of this song, which has remained a favourite of many record collectors, is not as birdlike as Rosa Raisa's lilting treatment.

Raisa was born in Poland and is best remembered for two things. Her marriage to the baritone Giacomo Rimini and creating the title role in *Turandot* in 1926.

**MAVIS RIVERS** - vocalist 1929 - 1992

My Sugar Is So Refined (Dee & Lippmann) with the Crombie Murdoch Trio. Stebbing S121. Recorded early 1950s.

In a somewhat uncharacteristic gesture, Ray had four records by Jazz Vocalist Mavis

Rivers in his collection, three Tanza and a Stebbing.

A Samoan by birth, the Rivers family moved to Auckland after the war where Mavis took up a job with Farmers as a stenographer. About 1949/50 she made the first of her 42 recordings for TANZA (To Assist New Zealand Artists) at the Astor Studios in Shortland Street. In 1953 she went to America where she studied under a scholarship at Brigham Young University in Utah. When her visa expired she returned briefly to Samoa before migrating back to America and settling in Los Angeles. Working her way as a vocalist with a Hawaiian group in the LA club scene, where apart from a break to have children she managed a contract with Capital Records. When she came under the attention of Frank Sinatra who once described her voice as the 'purist voice' in jazz, even comparing her to Ella Fitzgerald, her career as a jazz vocalist was assured.

She returned triumphantly to New Zealand in 1983 for a concert at the Auckland Town Hall. (*Information gleaned from notes by Shane Rivers that were kindly supplied by Dennis O. Huggard*).

INTERMISSION

**VLADIMIR ROSING** - tenor 1890 - 1963

Song of the Flea (Mussorgsky) with piano accompaniment by Frank St. Leger. Vocalion A 0207 matrix 01570 recorded in 1921.

This record along with 11 others was issued by Vocalion in an album entitled *The Realistic Songs of Mussorgsky*, with a booklet containing an essay written by Ernest Newman. There are many interesting songs listed in this album, several of which came with this *Song of the Flea*. To my way of thinking this is the version to beat all others. Specially in the way the singer enters into the spirit of the performance. He must have been a treat to watch when he sang this Mussorgsky song.

Much to my everlasting pleasure, Ray's collection was particularly rich in Rosing records with 15 titles on single and double sided Vocalions. While some in our group might find his interpretations 'over the top', you have to admire him for endeavouring to put Russian songs on the map as far as the English market was concerned. The *Record Collector*, which devoted an article and discography to him in 1991, states that this record should be played at 82 rpm.

**TITTA RUFFO** - baritone 1877 - 1953

Marechiere (Tosti) with orchestra HMV 052383 matrix 465al recorded in Milan 1912.

I have always taken Titta Ruffo in small doses. His voice is pretty overpowering at times. Those of you who are familiar with the *Otello* duet between Caruso and Ruffo will know what I mean by that, with both trying to shout one another down! Then again I am very fond of his *Barbiere di Siviglia* duets with Galvany where he adopts a very elegantly light approach. I am also enamoured of the two *Hamlet* titles I have in my collection, another of which is shared by Galvany. In all, a modest total of 11 tracks by this great singer.

I don't know if you've noticed it until now that this evening's programme has been devoid of Grand Opera. What I enjoy most now is hearing artists singing or playing music from their own country, something which I used to avoid like the plague when I began collecting. Let me explain. Whenever I had a choice to take either an operatic selection or a song, I always opted for the former. A snobbish attitude I suppose, but one which I'm now seriously trying to rectify.

This particular version of this popular Italian song is something out of the box - not

because of the voice or the way it's sung but the lack of understanding between the singer and conductor. Why it ever got issued is beyond me. I wonder if they had a rehearsal before committing it to disc!

**MARGARET SHERIDAN** - soprano (1889 - 1958)

I Know Where I'm Going (arr. Hughes) with piano accompaniment by Madame Adami. HMV DA832 matrix Bb9403 recorded 4th November 1926.

I have always been a fan of songs arranged by Herbert Hughes. I suppose my fascination for him started when I got John McCormack's *Star of the County Down*. Since then I have acquired six items by him and an album of his songs which Dennis Brew found for me which I treasure. Perhaps one day someone will bring out a CD featuring his folk songs. Perhaps it might even be Primo 1002 (CD of course)!

Margaret Sheridan was born in Ireland and had a short but impressive career in Italy and London. She is perhaps best remembered among record collectors for her duets with Pertile and a complete *Madame Butterfly*, which was made in 1929/30 and replaced the Rosina Buckman version in the EMI catalogue.

**MARCELLA SEMBRICH** - soprano (1858 - 1935)

The Lass With The Delicate Air (Arne) with orchestral accompaniment HMV 03704 matrix A4857 recorded in Camden 1907.

While this record makes something of a liar out of me, it is very hard to think of Marcella Sembrich as a Pole. Her very cultured style and voice disguise any nationalistic tendencies she may have had. Victor, always keen to exploit this market for extra nationalistic sales, did cut three Chopin tracks with her. I suppose if I landed one of these, I'd be tempted to let this Arne song go. But it has its own fascination and charm.

Those of you with a long association of the *Scratchy Record Group* will recall how Michael Woolf (who owned a reel to reel tape recorder which we lugged to Rangiora), David Graves (graphics), Walter Norris (farmer & owner of the cylinder in question) and yours truly (who devised the Alvaphone - a machine that allowed a stereo cartridge to horizontally track the Bettini cylinder), latched onto the importance of this find and went ahead with a project which launched Primo Records. Released simultaneously in England, America and Australia, sales went well and were richly rewarded when in December 1964, the *Gramophone* rated it the most important reissue for the year. This 45rpm is now something of a collector's item, even though it's been pirated by other companies.

**RICCARDO STRACCIARI** - baritone (1875 - 1955)

Core 'ngrato (Cardillo) with orchestra. Columbia 49522 matrix 49522-5 recorded 2nd October 1918.

One of my favourite baritones (I'd even put him ahead of Battistini and Ruffo but not de Luca). His career spanned from 1898 until his final operatic appearance in 1944. He recorded originally for Fonotipia and later transferred to Columbia. For reasons not known, his Columbias used to turn up fairly regularly here in New Zealand. I recall Boris Semeonoff asked me if I could locate and send him any of his American Columbias which he made from 1917-1921 and appeared here through Australian pressings. Evidently, these were never released in England.

I was particularly thrilled to locate this Italian song in Ray's collection because my representation of him is mainly built around his operatic titles. It now joins *Ideale*, *Mattinata* and *O Sole Mio*.

**JOHN CHARLES THOMAS** - baritone (1891 - 1960)

Lord Randall (arr. Scott) with piano accompaniment by C. Hollister. HMV ED50 matrix CS 030515. Recorded in Hollywood 2nd June 1938.

My reluctance to acknowledge some recording artists that I heard as a youth over the radio, no doubt initially held me back from acquiring any recordings of this artist. Admittedly, when I began to compile a numerical listing of Australian pressings from the EMI, Victor stables, I noted Thomas had chosen some rather esoteric numbers from the classical repertory to establish himself in this area besides his pot boilers which got played over the 2ZB request session every Sunday. Despite this new perspective, I did not budge. Therefore it was something of a shock when I saw the distinguished journal *The Record Collector* had devoted an issue to him in March 1979 Vol. 25 Nos. 1&2.

So it was that through Ray's selection I was able to reassess the situation without any pain. This spine chilling rendition of Lord Randall proves that my former concepts were unfounded, although I do think the Hollywood presentations which dotted his career probably held him back from further advancements to his operatic career.

**CLEMENT Q. WILLIAMS** - baritone

Love's Cigarette *Southern Maid* (Harold Fraser Simpson) with piano accompaniment by Gil Dech. Regal Zonophone G21929 matrix T 1309 Recorded 1929-30.

My friend in Sydney - Nelson Kenny informs me that Clement Q. Williams was broadcasting in Australia as early as the 1920s and became a teacher of singing at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide from 1948 - 1957. He evidently recorded a number of Aboriginal songs for Columbia but as far as we are able to determine wasn't an Aborigine. I first became familiar with Harold Fraser Simpson's song Love's Cigarette from *Southern Maid*, through a recording by the musical satirist Michael Aspinall in 1976. This was a Decca LP recording with Courtney Kenny at the piano. Better known for his *Maid of the Mountains*, Fraser Simpson's *Southern Maid* was also performed in Australasia with Gladys Moncrieff taking the lead role.

The label of this item actually lists two items from this light opera (a) Love's Cigarette and (b) Dark Grows the Sky. Whatever happened to the second track remains a mystery.

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We have been privileged to receive two booklets detailing the TANZA and STEBBING catalogues of recordings made in New Zealand, from the days of 78s to LPs. These are a labour of love by Dennis O. Huggard of 71 Tirimoana Road, Glendene, Auckland 1008. We note with some justifiable pride that the acknowledgements record the assistance in this project of Scratchy Record stalwart John Sutcliffe. Well done John!

Those interested in the development of our recording industry beyond a superficial curiosity, should realise that they cannot afford to be without these precious volumes.

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## REMINDER

At the last meeting at George Boroman's, it was decided that Sunday afternoons in the winter, held great appeal. So Please ignore other notices and present yourself at 93 Burma Road on **Sunday the 19th August at 2pm.**

**Notes issued with Primo Record P.1 001 "Voci di Primavera" (Johann Strauss) sung by Marcella Sembrich - soprano with piano accompaniment.**

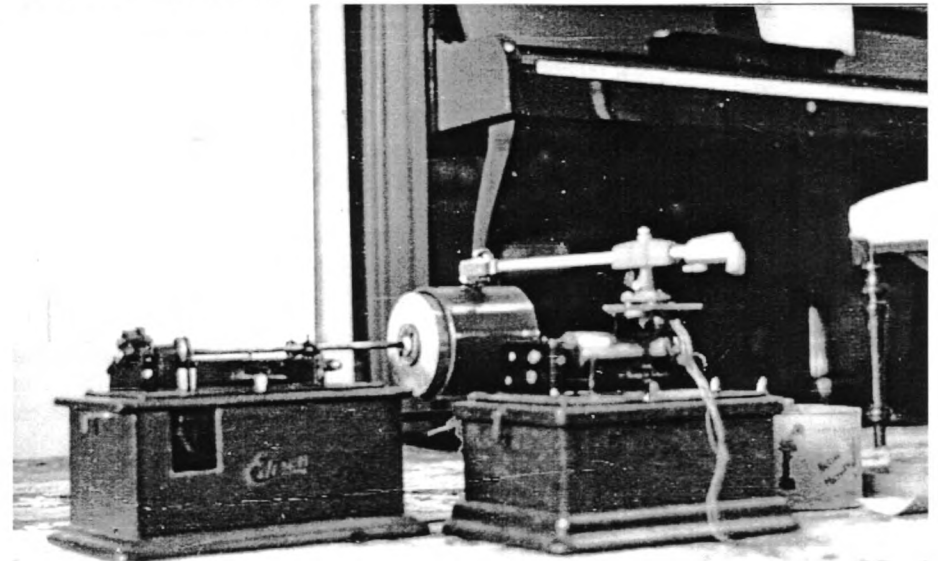
Released by J. Dennis, 61 Fore Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, U. K.  
Stanford Archive of Recorded Sound, The Knoll, Stanford University, California. U. S.  
A. C. E. Rees Lot 7. Baxter Street, Eltham, Victoria, Australia

The cylinder from which this recording is made dates from 1900. It was recorded in the New York laboratories of Gianni Bettini, an Italian whose pioneering activities in the 1890s did much to demonstrate the artistic merits of the phonograph as a musical instrument.

Bettini records appear rarely and the discovery of this single item in the loft of a hotel near Nelson in the South Island of New Zealand adds a final touch of romance to an incredible story.

As far as is known this is the first time a Bettini cylinder has ever been transferred to disc and made available for sale. The complicated process of transferring the sound from the cylinder to the master tape was accomplished with the aid of two Edison phonographs and some up-to-date electronic components. One Edison phonograph was adapted to take a five inch mandrel and the other, when positioned properly, carried a mounted stereo arm and cartridge in a course parallel to the first machine. An Edison two minute stylus was extracted from a reproducer and glued into position on the stylus bar. The resulting sound from this operation was considered excellent enough to warrant this reissue.

The present issue would not have been possible if the owner of the cylinder, Mr Walter Norris, had not willingly, co-operated in its loan and permitted its publication. All collectors will be indebted to Mr Norris for this opportunity of hearing for the first time, a genuine Bettini cylinder and thus aiding in the assessing of Bettini's importance in the history of recorded sound,



Above: The original notes which were issued with the 45rpm disc. Below: The apparatus set out on the carpeted living room floor of Walter Norris's house in Swannanoa, Rangiora. Copy of the score 'Voci di primavera' on the piano.