

# G&T GAZETTE

Established 1995. Now incorporating the *Edison Echo*

APRIL

2002

THE  
ROMANCE OF THE  
GRAMOPHONE.

By

T. LINDSAY BUICK, F.R. HIST. S.

AUTHOR OF

“OLD MARLBOROUGH,” “OLD MANAWATU,” “AN OLD  
NEW ZEALANDER,” “THE TREATY OF WAITANGI,”  
“NEW ZEALAND’S FIRST WAR.”

WELLINGTON, N.Z.

ERNEST DAWSON, LTD.

40 MANNERS ST.,

1927.

(600 copies printed)

## GLEANINGS FROM HERE AND THERE

### OVERSEAS SERVICE

Your editor recently had occasion recently to call upon the services of a firm in London to find an LP he'd been looking for for some time. It was an early 1950s DECCA recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* played by Julius Katchen, LK 4046. After emailing three companies who advertise this service in *The Classical Record Collector*, I struck oil with HAROLD MOORE'S RECORDS of 2 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1DE England. Their service was prompt and efficient. They can be thoroughly recommended to anyone in need of a similar "hunt and find" request. Cost wise it wasn't cheap, but it at least saved me hours of fruitless searching in places like *Slow Boat Records*.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following letter from Peter Burgis concerning his role in the PETER DAWSON BOOK is worth sharing with others because of the nature of ongoing "labour of love" projects.

Dear Bill,

Many thanks for the February issue of the G&T GAZETTE, which I greatly enjoyed. I trust it will continue to expand, both in size and circulation, as it fills a void in this part of the world.

I was also pleased that you liked the Dawson book. The comments were appropriate and well-balanced. I can fill you in (from behind-the-scenes) as to the contents and style of the discography. Originally I wanted a traditional chronological discography but soon realised this was not possible due to the space constraints. The publisher estimated another 100 pages or more was needed to go this way. The Song Titles was thus a good alternative, which saved space as it was also self-indexing. My original draft did allocate the composer and source as an extra line. I also separated them in type to facilitate easier reading. However, an editor chose the layout in the book, which is OK but (as you detected) not quite as readable as we both prefer.

I am working on an extended Dawson discography, with entries for every sound carrier in which he appears (including all

LPs & CDs), which will be in the usual format, in recording sequence.

This project will take some time (how unusual!) as I always believe in listening to every item (where available) to ensure the descriptions are accurate (and match up with the recording ledgers). No doubt other authors may also take up this project, so I will not be fussed as to the outcome, as long as it is well done. Hopefully the Song Title Discography will encourage collectors to contribute corrections and fresh information. At least we have a bench mark. I shall continue to look forward to the Gazette. By the bye, let me know if you have any difficulty in getting copies of the Dawson book, and I shall contact Currency Press (again).  
Peter Burgis

### ARTICLES THIS ISSUE

Opposite a tribute to Don Cameron. I searched high and low for a photo of DON to no avail. Personally I found it rather chilling occurrence having informed you all at Peter & John's presentation of Don's intended visit to Wellington in March, when he'd been dead for at least 24 hours. Another reminder of inevitable aging taking its toll is an article on equipment. This was originally published in the *Evening Post* a couple of years ago. Although I looked through Telephone Directories in the hope of finding the author, I was unsuccessful. Therefore I hope if Stefan Herrick ever gets to hear of this reprint of his article, he won't be into suing the proprietor's of the G&T Gazette. Anyone knowing of his whereabouts, should let me know so I can send him a copy of the Gazette with my compliments and an apology.

The Melba piece was written by Eric Ramsden, a one time reporter on the *Evening Post*.

Finally we are pleased to see our advertising columns finally taking off at long last. Roger Hart has broken this drought with notice of a sale of goods along with an outline of his intended programme. We hope others will take up the challenge and supply us with similar copy in the months to come.

## Obituary: Donald Hugh Cameron (1951-2002)

*I first met Don Cameron at the 2nd Phonograph and Record Collectors Convention in Wellington 1965. At the time he was a third former attending Onslow College which is not far from where I live. Later I discovered we both had something in common besides phonographs and old gramophone records. We were both adopted children.*

*In his formative collecting years, he was always accompanied by his father Len. When he finished college, I used to bump into him at the Wellington Polytechnic where he was doing a special course on a part time basis. Then came his move to Australia, with his wife Stacia. For a number of years, we kept in touch with the odd letter or card. Lately, we had the privilege of a visit from him in 2001 while he saw to his father's funeral and tidied up his estate. He was to come again in February to see his mother into a retirement home and clear up their Delhi Crescent property. Alas, this was not to be.*

*Most of the Wellington group will remember him in a number of roles. First there was the collector, always keen to acquire knowledge and material. He became a regular member of the Scratchy Record group and in time, took his turn in presenting programmes in his parents house in Khandallah. Another interest not commonly known was helping Ray Hedges with shows that he put on in his Aro Street theatre.*

*Then there was Don Cameron the Technical Book's representative at Whitcome and Tombs - later Whitcoulls. I wonder how many benefited from his stewardship of books that came into the country which had appeal to our membership. I certainly profited from him ringing me up and telling me what was coming up in their forthcoming sales.*

*When I visited him in Melbourne in the mid 1980s, he accompanied me around a number of second hand bookshops one afternoon. This gave me an insight into his job was a trade representative for Historical Railway publications - amongst other things.*

*I was very grateful when he offered to help me transfer parts of Ray Hedges records to Burma Road. That same year he put on what was to be his last programme of records at Des Wilson's place. Few of us knew at the time that he'd already undergone a very serious operation which had seen him close to death.*

*From reports which crossed the Tasman, it seems Don was on his rounds in Melbourne when he collapsed and died. A thoughtful gesture by Peter Fry saw a card sent to his family from all of us. This extended our sympathy to his wife Stacia and their sons Robert (16) and James (14).*

Bill Main

# GOODBYE KENWOOD

THE time has come to let Kenwood go. He's terminally ill. The first symptoms appeared about 18 months ago. Just small things that were out of character. Occasionally he'd have trouble speaking and reading. Then he started stuttering.

Steadily it got worse. The silences got longer, the stammering more frequent. He struggles with tasks he once found easy, the brightness has gone from his diodes, his variable output channel is shot.

It has been heartbreaking watching the decline, like the slow, insidious onset of Allizeirners. I'm thankful that Kenwood can't wander off, take things from the dairy without paying, drive the car on the footpath or sit outside the bank on a Sunday waiting for it to open. Kenwood simply whins and burns in bitter frustration before his "drawer empty" light shines red in defeat.

I've been dreading this. Kenwood and I have come a long way together.

He came along smack in the middle of my Jethro Tull phase. Understand this: for a young man of 23, a stereo is the second most important thing you can own behind a car. I could have made do with one pot, a bread knife, with no handle and a fridge with a glacier where the icebox used to be. But I couldn't have lived without a decent stereo.

Music is one of the great discoveries at that time of your life. For some reason you start hearing things you

couldn't hear before. It becomes addictive,

On a wet Saturday in 1992, I bought Kenwood.

He was a bastard child, a bare-bones amplifier and single-drawer CD player in matt black. Both components were leftovers that Colin Walkington Audio in Invereargill was selling cheap. The two KEF speakers were mid-80s vintage and might once have perched in some yuppie's lounge, except that Invercargill didn't have yuppies. Connecting it all was 20m of Monster lead.

"For the first time in my life," said my friend Gregor as we carried Kenwood out of the shop in its polystyrene and cardboard packaging and piled it in the back of the ute, "I wish I was you."

A flat can have nothing in it, but when you add a stereo it suddenly seems fully furnished. I've never owned furniture that I couldn't leave on the street for poor students to take when I moved. But Kenwood was different. He was a jewel to be treasured and protected (Armour All brought him up real nice).

When I left the Deep South, all my possessions were stuffed in the back of the Valiant - except Kenwood, who was buckled into the passenger seat.

It was the same every time we moved. At each new place Kenwood was always first out. It might have been a strange new town and a strange new house, but with Kenwood on duty it somehow seemed like home.

For much of the past decade, Kenwood has been a working stereo. Hundreds of review CDs have been stuffed in his slot, from Mendeissolin to the Migranies. He's had to put up with some appaffing stuff, but Kenwood made sure everyone got a fair hearing. Sometimes even Rod Stewart sounded almost OK.

Occasionally, I'd thumb the now-grooved play button and Kenwood would deliver pure audio magic. Everyone has a handful of albums that are indispensable, and I'm privileged to have been introduced to most of them by Kenwood. Some have been played hundreds of times, which makes it all the sadder that Kenwood now can't remember who they are. It's like a senile granddad not recognising his family.

Kenwood should have died years ago. He's a top-of-the-line machine, but even they are only supposed to last six or seven years, according to the man in the shop. Kenwood's been dropped, rained on, and his cooling slots have swallowed everything from cordial to bits of russian fudge. The cable to his left speaker was chewed by a rat, causing the audio equivalent of a stroke. Through it all he soldiered on. Now he's old, tired and unfixable.

A friend's dad has his old stereos stacked in the shed. She can't understand why he doesn't throw them out. He probably loves them too much.

Each of those, machines once brought huge amounts of enjoyment. The music they played postmarked the best moments in his life. Each of those old stereos has its own voice that he could not bring himself to silence. No two stereos ever sound exactly the same.

Kenwood's place will be taken by Bose, or NAD, or Denon, or Marantz.

I'd hate Kenwood to think I was trading up to a flash new floozy, or that I was ungrateful, because that's certainly not the case.

I've flirted with new models in the audio shops to the point where I'm now ignored by the staff. But every time I reach for the Mastercard, I think of Kenwood sitting at home in the lounge, half-buried under piles of review CDs, press releases, fag packets and DUST. I think of sitting rooms I'll never see again or the people who were there, and I put the card away again.

I'm not sure what I'll do with Kenwood. I could take him to the tip as I did with the TV. The send-off was supposed to be spectacular; I'd cast the TV into the pit, the tube exploding in a million pieces. It didn't explode, it just bounced a couple of times. A man on the other side scrambled down, heaved it into his Lada and drove off.

I couldn't bear that to happen to Kenwood, but nor could I bear to see him retired to some dark corner with no power socket or disembowelled for parts. I'm far more attached to him that I could ever be to any TV, toastie pie maker or foot spa.

But how do you give a beloved stereo - the machine that worked without complaint, a couple of black steel boxes that sometimes seemed human - a good and fitting farewell?

There is only one way. I'll have a few frinds over, break out the CDs I can't live without and - dementia permitting - keep the neighbours awake one last time.

Stefan Herrick

SCRATCHY RECORD MEETING

23 Shannon Street, Mt. Victoria  
Sunday Afternoon 14th April 2002  
at 2pm

PROGRAMME

78s Singers from the English speaking world  
including a quartet by Heddle Nash, Hubert Eisdell,  
Dennis Noble and Norman Allin.

Other solos by  
Arthur Jordan  
Tudor Davies  
Tom Burke  
John Brownlee  
Oscar Natzke

INTERVAL

LPs Emma Calve and the Castrato  
Mandalay by Speaks  
Mandalay by Albert  
Mandalay by Hedgecock  
. . . plus a look at the poem.  
Novelty item

INTERVAL

Video Edith Piaf

AFTERNOON TEA

# SALE SALE SALE

For inquiries telephone Roger Hart 384 5492

BOOKS

\$10 PER VOLUME

- 1948 Opera in Italy - Naomi Jacob & James C. Robertson (Operatic travel pre and post WWII).
- 1949 Singers of Today - Donald Brook (Richard Lewis, Joan Hammond, Paolo Silveri etc.).
- 1949 Come listen to my song - Roland Foster (Reminiscences of a life in music).
- 1952 Mary Garden's Story - Mary Garden & Louis Biancolli.
- 1953 The Flagstad Manuscript - as told to Louis Biancolli.
- 1953 Recital - Elena Gerhardt (Autobiography of the celebrated lieder singer).
- 1953 Kathleen Ferrier - A memento - edited by Neville Cardus.
- 1953 Singer & Accompanist - the performance of fifty songs by Gerald Moore
- 1971 The Singing Voice - covers operatic and non operatic voices - teachers etc. Robert Rushmere
- 1974 Monsieur Butterfly - The Story of Puccini - Stanley Jackson
- 1974 The Tenors edited H. Breslin - Pavarotti, Vickers, Tucker, Corelli, Domingo.
- 1978 Great Opera Stars in Historic Photographs edited by James Camner.
- 1985 A miscellany - John Amis (The star of My Music reveals all).
- 1988 Marian Anderson - Charles Patterson.
- 1993 Legendary Voices - Nigel Douglas (Caruso, Ponselle, Piccaver etc.).

BOUND COPIES OF THE RECORD COLLECTOR

Vol.18/19 April '68 to April '71; Vol.20/21 July '71 to March '74  
Vol. 22/23 May '74 to August '77; Vol.24/25 January '78 to Feb. '80  
Vol.26/27 May '80 to March '83; Vol.28/29 May '83 to Dec. '84

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**Articles in the form of memoirs, reviews or comment  
are desperately required for the next issue!**

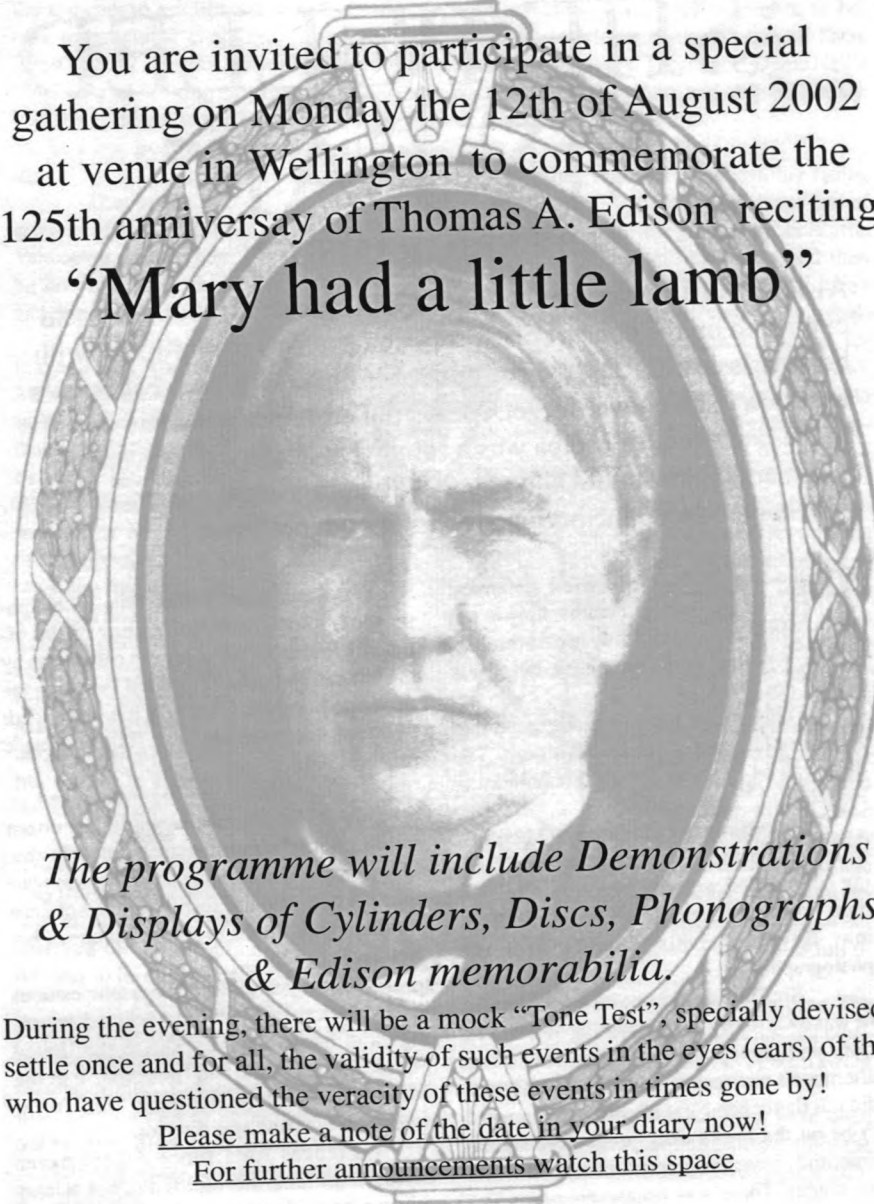
# SALE SALE SALE

## BOUND COPIES OF THE GRAMOPHONE

April 1951 to May 1952; June 1952 to May 1953;  
June 1953 to April 1954; June 1954 to May 1955;  
June 1955 to May 1956; June 1956 to May 1957;  
June 1957 to October 1957; September 1963 to January 1965;  
*Included in this lot are a complete VA/VB Archives list also a prospective  
assortment for an Archive follow up - which never happened!*

## RECORDS

2LPs	Rarities from the French Repertoire (Dufranne, Brohly, Gilly etc)	Rubini	\$10
3LPs	Falstaff (Verdi)(Valdengo, Elmo cond.Toscanini)		\$10
3LPs	Flauto Magico (Mozart)from the Met.1956 cond.Walter, Hines,Anara.		\$10
1LP	A Record of Singers (1902-1912)Supple.to Vol.1 Record of Singing		\$10
1LP	Titta Ruffo scenes from Rigoletto, Hamlet etc.		\$5
1LP	Galliano Masini Fedora, Andrea Chenier, etc.		\$5
1LP	Piero Cappuccilli in concert w. piano		\$5
1LP (10 in.)	Leo Slezak lieder recital		\$5
1LP	Benjamin Luxon Victorian & Edwardian Ballads		\$5
1LP	John McCormack - favourite songs		\$5
1LP	Richard Tucker (Show songs)		\$5
2LPs	Cine Parade -French film songs(1931-42)		\$10
4LPs boxed	The First Commercially Successful Recordings		\$12
	Side A - Edison Amberols - Opera Bonci etc.		
	Side B - Edison Discs - Anselmi, Bori etc.		
	Remainder are 1890s marches, waltzes, vaudeville songs, cornet solos etc.		
	Sides C,D,E,F, North American Cylinders		
	Sides G,H, Berliner Discs.		
2LPs	Rosenkavalier (abridged) Lehmann, Schumann,Olszewska 1933		\$10
3LPs	Don Giovanni- Pinza, Kipnis, Novotna Calter Met 1942		\$10
2LPs	Ballo in Maschera Tagliavini, Tassinari, Valdengo 1956		\$10
3LPs	Werther - Alfredo Krauss, Tatiana Troyens		\$10
2 LPs	Rarities from the French repertoire (Dufranne, Brohly etc.)		\$10



You are invited to participate in a special  
gathering on Monday the 12th of August 2002  
at venue in Wellington to commemorate the  
125th anniversary of Thomas A. Edison reciting  
“Mary had a little lamb”

*The programme will include Demonstrations  
& Displays of Cylinders, Discs, Phonographs  
& Edison memorabilia.*

During the evening, there will be a mock “Tone Test”, specially devised to  
settle once and for all, the validity of such events in the eyes (ears) of those  
who have questioned the veracity of these events in times gone by!

Please make a note of the date in your diary now!

For further announcements watch this space

# THE GREAT MELBA - 'SHE PULLED MY EAR'

BY ERIC RAMSDEN

ALTHOUGH I heard her sing on several occasions, both in grand opera and on the concert platform - and she was magnificent, with her peerless, effortless voice - I met her once only, and that was an occasion I shall never forget. Melba pulled my ear, and she meant it. In the late twenties Melba was a somewhat heavily built woman, commanding in stature and voice, with a truly regal presence. Melba, who had come up the hard way, was feared, not loved.

In the late 1920s, Melba was a somewhat heavily built woman, commanding in stature and voice, with a truly regal presence. Melba, who had come up the hard way, was feared, not loved.

One winter's morning she came into Auckland Harbour on the liner *Niagara*. The diva was on her way for a short holiday in Honolulu.

It was my duty to interview her. Just what she said does not matter, but I recall asking her to stand with the then New Zealand-born Premier of New South Wales. Sir Thomas Bavin, and his daughter, for the photographer.

Sir Thomas did not look very happy: he was dwarfed by the dominating Melba. The story and photograph duly appeared in that afternoon's newspaper, and the latter, I knew, did not flatter her. Next afternoon I happened to be on the liner's deck just before sailing time, and, quite unexpectedly ran full-tilt into the singer. There was no escaping her. The eyes of the songstress were cold and hard,

"Come here, young man," she commanded. In one hand was a copy of the offending journalist the other she caught me by the left ear, and quite firmly, led me along the deck into her suite. Glaring at me, she added: "You did not make me look 100! You made me look 101!"

Meanwhile the singer searched an open trunk. Finally, she thrust half a dozen studio photographs of herself towards me. "Take them," she directed. "Put them in your pigeonholes. And use them!" I fled, not even waiting to ask Melba to autograph one of her pictures.

Some years later another tempestuous songstress arrived by ship at Auckland, returning from her native Australia to the United States. For years she had "queened" it at the Metropolitan Opera House, in New York, where her husband was director.

Frances Aida (once Adler) never achieved the fame that Melba did. But at least this can be said she was equally tough. The first reporter who entered her cabin emerged

seconds later with a very red face. He had had the audacity to ask her one or two questions of a biographical character. "Have you no 'Who's Who' in your office?" she yelled. "Makeuse of it!" one more tactful journalist had struggled out to the liner with a bouquet for La Alda. But the flowers availed him little.

That night her accompanist sailed on to Vancouver without her: he had had more than enough.

Later, we learned the trouble. Melba was then in Australia, and it appeared that there was some feud between the singers. Some inferred that Alda had not let Melba into the Metropolitan - or at least she had kept her out. Alda had once been a chorus girl at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne. The fact remained, according to her, that Melba had done her utmost to ruin her Australian tour.

Whether that was true we will probably never know but the fact remained that Alda believed the failure of her tour to be due to Melba.

The late Rosina Buckman, the New Zealand born soprano, who enjoyed quite a success abroad years ago, told me a story concerning Melba. Returning to New Zealand from London by way of Melbourne, she and her husband Maurice D'Oisley, were invited to Melba's palatial Victorian home one Sunday afternoon.

The "Queen Song" asked the younger

woman to sing to her guests. Rosina, a lovable, generous soul, with no malice in her make-up, selected her aria and sang it. There was polite applause. Thereupon, Dame Nellie marched up to the piano, and sang faultlessly, of course-the identical aria.

One more anecdote.

Whatever may have been her faults,

Nellie Melba was one of the greatest publicists the musical world had then known. On one occasion she arived by rail in Sydney from Melbourne for a series of concerts, and, as usual, was met by the Press, carefully shepherded by John Lemmore, the flautist (and her personal representative). He was the first person admitted to her carriage. "Well,how's the booking, John?" she inquired. "Not so good, I am afraid," he replied.

Melba thought for a moment, and then telling Lemmore to admit the journalists, she cried "Sendfor the Station Master!" When the latter arrived she declared she had never had a more uncomfortable night in her life. "This train is full of

fleas!" she stormed.

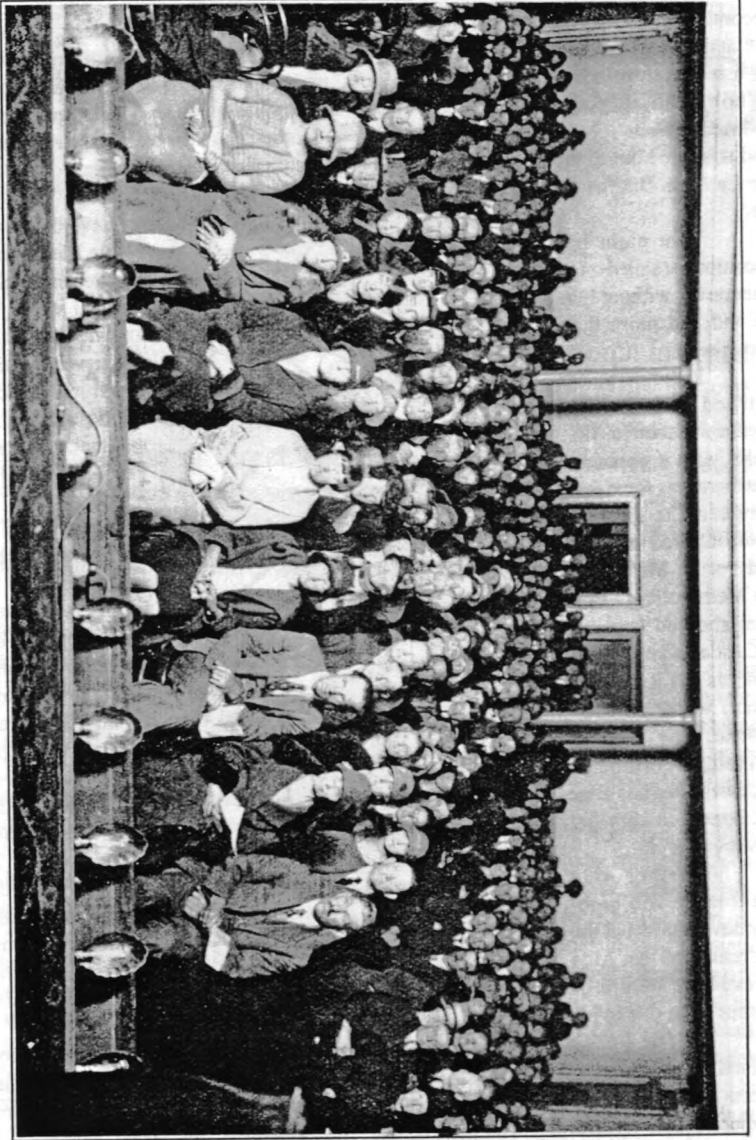
That flea story served its purpose. The papers were full of Nellie Melba and her complaint, and -the booking took an upward swing immediately.

Melba may certainly not have been loved in the sense that her contemporary the actress Nellie Stewart was loved by the public, but she was great.

*Evening Post* 10 June 1961



Caricature by Enrico Canoso



A GRAMOPHONE RECITAL IN WELLINGTON, N.Z.

*Unfortunately the Gallery, which was equally crowded, was cut out in the process of taking the flashlight.*

A rare picture of the Scratchy Record Group in its heyday at the Wellington Concert Chamber. Illustration from Lindsaay Buick's *Romance of the Gramophone*. See the cover for the title page. *Editor's collection.*