

# G&T GAZETTE

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For most collectors the Fonotipia label is well known and eagerly sought around the globe. However, not many understand the meaning of the serial number middle left. In this case as No. 1 it represents the first pressing from the factory stamper. Every subsequent copy was individually numbered. Dennis Brew who acquired this recording from the Bert Cadman collection refers to this rarity on pages 8/9 of this issue.

## GLEANINGS FROM HERE & THERE

### LITTLE RED HEN COMPLEX

There were times when I took it upon myself to become your scribe, when I felt like the nursery rhyme character - *The Little Red Hen*. The story involves a Hen who found some wheat and asked her farmyard friends to help her dig, plant, reap, grind, and bake the flour into bread. Her friends would not help in any of these chores but when she asked them if they'd like some of the bread, there was not hesitation on their part to accept her offer. I'm sure you can see the analogy I'm trying to make!

All of this 'cross bearing' received a bit of a jolt when my friend Hugh Price presented me with a copy of his *The truth AT LAST about the Little Red Hen*. In this Hugh establishes why the Hen's friends declined to help listing reasons their other duties which they maintained contributed to the running of the farm. The Hens reaction to their inability to assist is rather interesting. She tells them that if they feel maligned by this bad press, they should get someone to write down their side of the story!

Now I don't think I have ever thought of my readership in the same light as the Hens friends. We all lead busy lives and I would never dream of persecuting record collectors in this fashion. Nevertheless if I do sound cluckish on occasions from my editorial nest, you'll now be in a better position to appreciate my feelings, especially when I get offers from various individuals to write pieces for me that never materialise!

### ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

The well known publication the *RECORD COLLECTOR* has launched a competition for it's readers to submit a piece about three recordings they cherish - the idea being they share their enthusiasm with others and perhaps stimulate an interest in records beyond their own personal preferences. Your editor has taken it upon himself to enter a piece on two Loewe songs and a recording by Sigrid Onegin.

Being somewhat pessimistic about my chances (the winner will get a free years subscription) I'm forced to use it as a filler for this issue because of a dearth of material.

Elsewhere Dennis Brews give a tribute to Bert Cadman and I republish an article which I found in a weekly which I'd like to explore in depth for chitchat articles on artists who visited New Zealand.

## RECORD COLLECTOR COMPETITION ENTRY

Tom der Rheimer ( Carl Loewe - von Friedrich Rückert) Leo Slezak - tenor with piano accompaniment by Heinrich Schacker. Recorded in 1928 Grammophon 19926 matrix number 1124/25bm.

Spirito santo (Carl Loewe - von Der Goltz) Leo Schützendorf - bass with piano accompaniment by Prof. Max Saal. Recorded c.1929 Christschall 68 matrix number 4040

The Fairy Pipers (Frederick Weatherly - A. Herbert Brewer) Sigrid Onegin - contralto with orchestral accompaniment. Brunswick 15155 recorded c.1926.

My selections for this article come from areas of my record collection which are somewhat special from the general accumulation of singers on Berliners to CDs,

I have been collecting the songs and ballads of Carl Loewe for more than a decade. There are two of his songs which I would like to feature in this submission. The third item comes from an 'odd ball' grouping of records which in this instance I'd like to attribute to Danny Kay, the popular American entertainer of the immediate post war period, who helped me appreciate some of the more lighter aspects of record collecting.

I was initially attracted to the ballads of Carl Loewe when I obtained a Columbia album of 78's featuring Sir George Henschel. His *Der Erlkönig* and *Heinrich der Vogler* had special appeal for the way Loewe dramatically blended the words and music to assist the story line. This discovery set me off on the trail of more recordings so I scanned old Australasian record catalogues to see what had been imported into New Zealand.

Retailers in New Zealand were more or less dependent on supplies from Australia and Britain for all record imports for many years because we didn't begin pressing records for the local market until 1949. I found that Loewe titles were almost non-existent in the HMV & Columbia lists. Then I came across collections which had gravitated to New Zealand because of the influx of European refugees in the late 1930s. Prior to the declaration of war in 1939 New Zealand gave entry to a large number of families who'd been fortunate to leave Europe with their possessions intact. These were a source of classical vocal recordings when they came on the market and led me to my first selection for this article, a 1928 recording of Tom der Rheimer sung by Leo Slezak.

What makes this version of Tom der Rheimer special to me is the appeal it

holds with those who like their music whimsical and fanciful. It's a tale of a poet who pays homage to a beautiful woman on a horse who turns out to be the Queen of the Elves. She responds to his advances by telling him that if he kisses her, he will be in thrall for seven years! Tom accepts the challenge and the couple ride off into the sunlight to the tinkling of little silver bells which were tied to the horses braided mane. The piano accompaniment is especially wonderful in this passage.

Kutsch/Reimens noted that Slezak distinguished himself in front of the recording horn by giving great maturity to his conceptions. This characteristic is very apparent in this particular instance which takes two sides of a 12 inch recording. Given this luxury he is able to evince everything from the four verses. In fact there would be a number of collectors who would wince at his somewhat operatic treatment of all his German *lieder* recordings. Acknowledging this, I've always favoured records by singers who are prepared to go that extra mile in their interpretations.

My second Loewe choice follows the first in that its by a singer not necessarily noted for his ballad recordings. The bass-baritone Leo Schützendorf is remembered today as an exponent of *buffo* roles and light operetta. His foray into songs and ballads therefore might be considered something of a rarity. Although he was not a prolific recording artist, his *Spirito Santo* is wonderful intimate recording which I find irresistible. I have four versions of this song in my collection in comparison to seventeen of Tom der Rheimer, so it's not one of the more commonly encountered Loewe ballads.

*Spirito Santo* is about a flower that distinguishes itself with matchless beauty exuding peace and tranquility to the poet's breast.

Schützendorf's large and expressive voice is recorded in a room which gives off resonance, a characteristic which graces a number of German recordings during the early years of electrical recording. Another characteristic which I rather admire in comparison to studios that have been dampened down with sound absorbing materials. Schützendorf's performance is notable for the way he controls his voice to suit the music and the words, rising and falling from almost a whisper to passionate conviction. No record in my collection has ever impressed my friends as much as this when I play it at gatherings of local record collectors.

Finally Sigrid Onegin's *The Fairy Pipers* is not one which follows the same vein as the previous items.

I was first made aware of this song during the immediate post war period when the popularity American movie star/entertainer Danny Kay was at his zenith. Kay surprisingly sang *The Fairy Pipers* exactly as it was written with liberties to the music taken out with playful voice modulation. Those who are familiar with *The Fairy Pipers*, might concur that it would be rather inappropriate to do anything out of the ordinary with this song because it is so ridiculous in the

first place.

Why Sigrid Onegin decided to sing this for the Brunswick remains a mystery as it is not typical of what she had become famous for. Perhaps the company wanted something a little lighter to add appeal to their catalogue holdings? Whatever the reason, we are treated to a stolid performance which not only displays her Germanic/ English, with an ending that is all revealing. Perhaps this gives us a clue why she took on this song? Onegin holds a note for an interminable length of time and then follows it with a trill that would rival the universally acclaimed virtuoso in this department, Selma Kurz!

My predilection for *The Fairy Pipers* goes beyond the my tenuous connection with Danny Kay and Sigrid Onegin. Rosina Buckman the New Zealand soprano recorded this for Columbia in 1914/5 and hence my interest in this ditty is immediately identified.

In conclusion, I would hope that all collectors have a corner or two in their collections for something like I've attempted to describe which adds another dimension to the art of record collecting.

Willam (Bill) Main



"Lullaby" by Hoffnung.

## “SUNNY ITALY. THE SPELL OF SINGERS AND SONGS”

### APOLLO GRANFORTE

There's a distinctive air about Signor Apollo Granforte, the famous baritone of the Melba-Williamson grand opera soloists, that arrests immediate attention. And when his deep, vibrant tones ring out with resonant force, and he enacts the moods of each character he so vividly visualises, his capture of the audiences is complete.

"I am sorry I cannot speak English more," he tells you with that chivalrous note and attractiveness of manner that enchants one. "In two or three more months I think I speak it very well English," he added smilingly.

But he, with Signor Piccaluga, has a "guide, counsellor and friend" in Mr. L. White, who has acted as interpreter for them in Australia. Through Mr. White, Signor Granforte expressed himself in glowing terms regarding the demonstrative audiences that greet them in Auckland. The enthusiasm of the New Zealand public appealed to him strongly, and he could sense their deep and sincere appreciation and instinct for music. This was also evidenced in numerous letters received by him in Auckland.

Signor, also per medium of Mr. White, was eloquent in voicing his opinion that a small opera company would do much good in increasing 'the stimulus for music in this country, and he gathered from the hearty applause that the public were acquainted with the full opera from which he and his colleagues were giving excerpts.

Touching on concert and opera work "It is very easier in opera," said Signor, in his expressive way. "Concert every night a lot of songs: in opera, not every night, and not so many songs." But Signor says he is very happy to sing much for them, and with all embracing sweep of his arms said he would like to give all of his repertoire (no small task, as it includes 47 operas), but he would sing as many songs as possible during a short season.

Signor expressed himself as being interested in New Zealand; its progress as a young country seemed to him most wonderful. Through the hospitality of friends he had seen much of Auckland's beautiful scenery, and the flowers at Ellerslie racecourse evoked his special admiration.

He thanked the public for their kind applause and appreciation, and hopes to come back another day. He was very anxious to convey that this was not just a prepared speech. "I speak it from my heart!" He said with fervour.

### NINO PICCALUGA

The handsome, gallant tenor, Signor Piccaluga, has won all hearts with his happy personality, as with the magic of his singing. He makes you see sunshine, blue skies, romance, and all that stands for Sunny Italy.

Youth is on his side, too. It is only four years since he launched out into grand opera, and as the youngest tenor in Italy he is in frequent demand. Just before coming to Australia for the Melba-Williamson grand opera season, Signor was fulfilling engagements at La Scala, - Milan "Manon," Wally," "Boris Goudonoff."

Next year Signor Piccaluga goes to sing at the Metropolitan, Chicago, and in March he sings at Covent Garden for the Tait-Williamson grand opera season, with Melba and Toti dal Monte in the starry firmament.

"This is the first time I go on the concert," Signor remarked. "And I like so much the firm, so I accept," he added with one of his ingratiating smiles. This is practically his meaning, but a plain prosaic English statement doesn't really conjure up the picturesque flow of language in which the tenor expressed himself to his interpreter (Mr. L. White) concerning his appreciation of the Australian visit.

"Very nice," and he smiled again.

With his fellow artists, Signor is picking up English as he goes along, and is very delighted when he learns a new phrase.

Another fluent aside to Mr. White, and it was to the effect that when he comes back in 1926 which is quite on the cards - he hopes he won't need an interpreter.

"Me speak you without" he ventured gallantly to a "Review", representative.

Auckland with its warmth and sunshine made a cordial impression on the brilliant singer at once, and on the interviewer mentioning "audience" in an interrogatory tone, there were more smiles and gestures that spoke for themselves as this much-encored tenor responded with heartiest enthusiasm, "Magnifica! Magninca!"

### “VERY GOOD INDEED”

Signorina Augusta Concato, the fascinating soprano of the party, is the wife of Signor Piccaluga, and whatever the Italian for "joie de vivre" is -well, she has it!

The little signora is brimful of vitality and vivacity, and has a keen sense of fun and humour. She has one favourite English phrase - "Very good, indeed," "Very nice indeed," and is very proud indeed when she can bring it in at the right moment, while her husband smiles indulgently when she masters one of our intricacies.

This interview along with the advertisement below, appeared in the NEW ZEALAND SPORTING AND DRAMATIC REVIEW, 27 November 1924.



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## BERT CADMAN

### A TRIBUTE BY DENNIS BREW

Bert passed away in May, 2002, and for over 30 years we kept close contact. We met at a garage sale in Remuera, both answering an advertisement in the *N.Z. Herald*. When I arrived Bert had already selected a small pile of discs, so I worked at the other end of a long table covered with operatic 78's - the usual HMV/Columbia/Parlophone. I quickly extracted a few items and Bert jokingly remarked, "You seem to know what you want, I don't know what to take". We introduced ourselves and I asked to look through those items he had selected - the obvious names like Caruso/McCormack/Galli-Curci and Chaliapine. I advised him to take several records he had left behind - Granforte "Inno di Roma"/Pattiera Parlophones/Seinemeyer etc. We exchanged phone numbers and a few days later Bert phoned and stated that he was hooked on old records. Could he visit me to listen and learn. He already owned a sizable collection of LP reissues, but had been overwhelmed by the lure of the original 78's.

After that initial visit we met regularly and almost immediately Bert began to bid on lists from Henry Hirsch of The Record Album, Larry Holdridge, Milt Weiss and Discor in Buenos Aires. Those were the days when one could still buy semi-rarities for \$5 -10 US, and Bert frequently bought Victor discs from Henry Hirsch for as little as \$1-50, people like Ancona/Matzenauer/Anseau/ Journat etc. He quickly developed a predilection for French and Russian singers and these artists formed the basis of his overseas bidding. Bert was also one of the early collectors to realize that Hill and Dale recordings were neglected and they offered a cheaper alternative to pick up rare singers. He played them on a Brunswick gramophone, with decent results. He also decided that he would not be a condition freak and was quite willing to speculate on down-graded items - or even lightly damaged discs. I kept a Marconi Dog Monarch of 'Lucia di Lammermoor' with a piece of rim missing just into the introduction but with an otherwise perfect surface - he paid \$9US for this from Discor, saving himself \$200 or more!

On a few occasions he went overboard. I remember one evening he excitedly phoned me to announce the arrival from the Argentine of a 12" Navarini Fonotopia "Barbiere/Don Carlos" for which he had paid \$200 - a record! He was so proud of this disc which is now one of my prized possessions(see cover illustration). It is a

unique copy as it carries the serial No. 1, which is the very first copy to come off the press! Previously the lowest serial number I had encountered was No. 11. Bert pestered me for many years to sell him my Erschov "Prophete", and offered me it's market value of \$300 - I resisted, but when I went to live in Prague for 2 years it finally changed hands. Now it resides again in my collection.

Those artists he collected in detail included Chaliapine/Journet/Thill/ Huni-Mihacsek/Renaud/d'Arkor/Jadlowker/Piccaver/Bonci/Anselmi/Supervia and Kipnis. I'm sure he would have liked to acquire more discs by Smirnov/Friant/Devries/ the Imperial Russian singers and others, but such discs seldom surface in New Zealand and are quickly snapped up if they appear on lists.

I should mention that we shared the collection of the late Dr. Heppner. We laid out about 3,000 records. Bert gave me first choice, and we proceeded to take 5 discs each in turn, without a hint of conflict - that was Bert.

He worked as an Education Officer at the Auckland Museum. Apart from records he had two other passions - books and tennis. His basement probably contained more books than records, mostly history, music and English literature. He kept playing tennis into veteran tournaments, probably until about age 75. He died in his 80th year. Bert was a thoroughly good man, free of the jealousies and secretiveness shown by some - collectors. We had similar vocal tastes, left wing views, fondness for sport and a general outlook on life. I miss his companionship not only because of old shellacs. If Bert were to present an evening to your group I think his programme would be based on a selection from the following discs. Most of these he played frequently to me.

CAMPAGNOLA - Si j'etais Roi	Disque P 561
DAVIDOV - The Recruit's Farewell	Favorite 1-75125
GERLACH-RUSNAK - Alessandro Stradella	Electrola EG 2887
LABINSKY - Tishina	Pre Dog 3-22867
LEMESHEV - Trilby's Aria.	Victor 4068
RAITSHEV - Tishina	Vox 3565
BAKLANOV - Demon "Do not weep"	Col. A 5271

BAUGE - Ariodant (Mehul)	Col. 9155M
BRODERSEN - Sei mir gegrüsst (Schubert)	Parlophon P 1290
BURKE - My Dreams (Tosti)	Imperial Z 117
DALMORES - Trovatore "Ah si ben mio"	Pre Dog 052261
FRIANT - Prince Igor	Odeon 123543
JADLOWKER - Vittorio mio core	Pol. 66633
MARCONI - Lucia "Tu che a Dio"	Dog 052234
NEMETH - Tote Stadt	Pol. 66623
NAVARINI - Barbiere "La Calunia"	Fonotipia 74033
ERSHOV - La Prophete	Angel 022012
RENAUD - Damnation de Faust	G&T 2-2713
SCHWARZ - Tales of Hoffmann	Sch. 72530
ESCALAIS - La Cid	Fonotipia 39563
ALVAREZ - Joseph	Pathe 1658
de la TOUR - Meistersinger	Pathe 272
BELLINCIONI - Mefistofele	Pathe 4391
NIVETTE - La Juive	Odeon 36854
JADLOWKER - Il Seralio "Wenn der Freude Tränen"	Odeon 76042

Whenever Bert visited me for a session he would wind up the evening by saying "Can I hear my one for the road"? which meant would I play for him Sobinov's unaccompanied song "The Recruit's Farewell" - he loved this record. It provoked him into buying the Davidov version, which has its own charm - that's what makes our wonderful hobby so interesting and rewarding.

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Three record collectors. Left to right, Bert Cadman, Dennis Brew and Robin Watt - Auckland 1979.

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