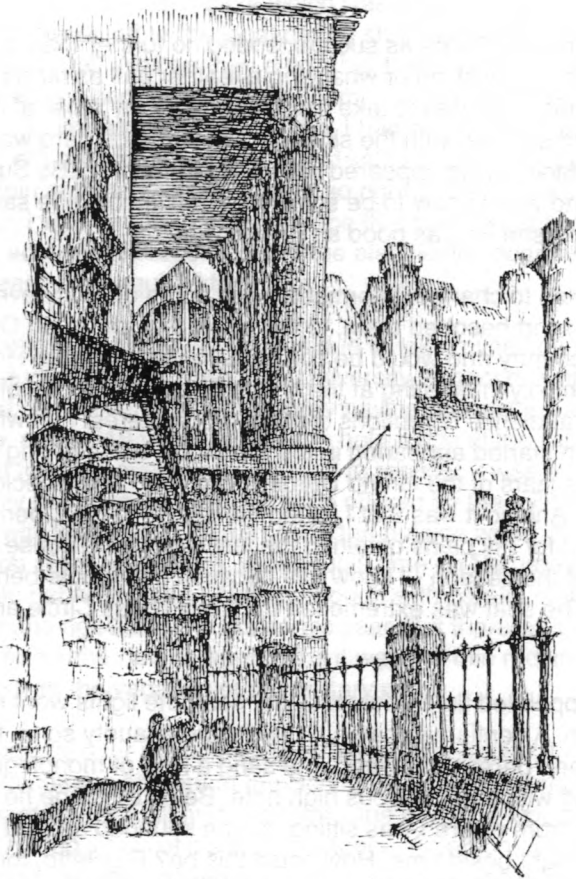

G&T GAZETTE

Established 1995. Incorporating the *Edison Echo*

January/February/March

2006



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The Guildhall School of Music and Drama - and how I got there.

by Roger Hart

(ACT ONE)

Up until 1949, my ambitions as such extended no further than, according to which season it was, kicking or whacking a leather ball as far as I could. I had a drawing skill which I tended to take for granted and my musical interest more or less started and stopped with the singer Frank Crumit. There was also a lady named Grace Moore who appeared not infrequently on 2ZBs Sunday request programme, and who I knew to be somehow special, but she sang quite high and I didn't think she was as good as Frank Crumit.

All this was to change. Information with some difficulty eventually filtered through to my sport besotted brain, to the effect that an Italian Opera Coy had arrived in the country and would be coming soon to an Opera House near me. This was only mildly interesting at the time, but further reports of people queuing and rapturous audience receptions created more interest and when the odd political cartoon started appearing in the *Evening Post* featuring Sid Holland and Walter Nash as stars of the Grand Uproar Company, then I decided it was time to check it out. And so it was that I joined the queue at the Opera House in Wellington, and for my pains obtained the last seat in the house for the final performance of the season - I know this because the people behind me were turned away. The seat was extreme left front row Dress Circle and the opera was *Rigoletto*.

At the appointed time I duly took my seat, the lights went down and the curtain went up. A gentleman came on and sang a jaunty song, then a small rather misshapen person appeared and sang a king of monologue with great intensity ending with a thunderous high note. Being on stage he was of course some distance from where I was sitting, but he sounded as if he could have been standing right beside me. How could this be? *Rigoletto*, for it was he, then went home, sang a touching duet with his daughter and went off to ply his trade as a jester at the court of the Duke of Mantua, and on arriving back, found his daughter gone. I have never forgotten the changing facial expression from puzzlement to naked fear and the agonised cries of "Gilda, Gilda" as he searched high and low for her.

Then follows the riveting scene which even now, seems to me to repre-

sent some kind of dramatic high point in Italian Opera. *Rigoletto* goes back to the court, enters singing his little jesters ditty, but looking furtively and fearfully around him. The courtiers mock him and he rounds on them, cursing them for their cruelty and then collapses pleading to tell him where his daughter is. This scene never fails to move given a baritone of sufficient voice and dramatic projection and this the 57 year old Mario Basiola most certainly had.

If the rest of the opera wasn't quite on this level, it was compelling enough, and I left the Opera House in a kind of daze which was to last a couple of days, whereupon I took myself off to the local record shop and asked did they have anything from *Rigoletto*? Well no they didn't, but they did have Joan Cross singing 'One Fine Day' and 'They call me Mimi', so I bought that. I did obtain a week or two later Melba singing *Caro Nome*, I had heard of her and HMV (Australia) were still pressing her records in 1949, but I found it disappointing. The voice was thin and the orchestra tinny, so right at the outset of my record collecting career, I was forced to acknowledge that there were two kinds of 78 rpm record, the acoustically recorded and the electrically recorded, and that a different set of ears was required for each.

In March of the following year, I was due to take myself off to Christchurch and become a student at the Canterbury University School of Fine Art. But the Army intervened, the Government of the day having brought in Compulsory Military Training, and all 18 year olds able to hold a rifle at the slope for 10 seconds without toppling over, were required to register. I was not pleased about this, mainly because the remuneration offered by the military was minuscule compared with what could be earned in the outside world. For instance, a three month burst in the wool store, with double time on Saturday and triple time on Sunday, could net a tidy sum - almost enough with careful management to see one through the rigours of the academic year. But there was nothing I could do about it and so for the next three months it was the thin red line of 'eroes and learning to cope with the vagaries of the military mind.

Passing quickly over my undistinguished military career, I headed south and a trifle late became a student at the School of Art which turned out to be as bad as I had heard it was. Dull and academic, the teaching would not have changed in the 70 odd years of its then existence. A person or an object would be set up which one was supposed to draw or paint and the one who achieved the greatest degree of realism won - so to speak. No doubt an essential part of the learning process, but any tentative inquiry as to whether this unrelenting emphasis on the purely visual was doing much for our creativity would usually bring forth the withering reply to the effect that if it was damaging to our creativity then it was quite obvious we didn't have any to damage. Also as the year wore on it became obvious that the University heating system, which like the

building that housed it, was very antiquated, and could only produce a barely discernable warmth with which to combat the chill of a Christchurch winter. Impromptu cricket matches in the Antique room were sometimes needed to restore circulation which was not always kind to the plaster statues that lined the walls. However I was determined to tough it out as the Diploma would be my entry into secondary teaching, and anyway starving in a garret was not an option.

There were compensations however. Christchurch contained a goodly number of 2nd hand shops which usually housed a pile of 78s from which could be extracted the odd gem, and indeed there was one such shop that dealt solely in 2nd hand records. I remember harbouring unfriendly thoughts towards a fellow devotee who beat me by 30 seconds to Kipnis's Columbia recording of Schubert's Erl King, a version I have never possessed or even heard to this day. There were other delights. The University had a very good drama society run by Ngaio Marsh which did some interesting things, and there were concerts; I heard my first *Dream of Gerontius* in Christchurch with the superb Mary Pratt as the angel, Stewart Harvey was the excellent baritone, and Gerontius was sung by a rather good English tenor named John Chew. There was a concert given by the visiting Chinese bass Y Kwei Sze, another by the English bass Norman Walker and a visit from the then fledgling National Opera of Australia presenting *Faust* with Ronald Dowd, and *Il Tabarro & Gianni Schichi* with Neil Easton. I also acquired a singing teacher, a local contralto who declared me to be a bass, probably hedging her bets, as I only had about six notes!

Thing improved a bit in the third year and there was Capping Week where the previous years graduates were presented with their degrees and diplomas. This was usually accompanied by a large revue type theatrical production for which I presumably auditioned, and was given the part of Sir Willebebe Sorry (Willoughby Norrie - Governor General of N.Z.) and a patter song to be sung to the tune of 'When I was a lad' from *HMS Pinafore*. I caused a measure of consternation when I said I didn't know it! I have little memory of this event apart from the fact that Peter Schwartz conducted and the presence of a fellow thespian whose character decreed that he wear a loud yellow check suit - it was Wilhelm Main, contributing to the culture of the city.

And so the three years came to it's not hugely satisfactory end, and it was off to the Auckland Teachers Training College Division "C" one year postgraduate course where we were inculcated into the mysteries of teaching. As it turned out, apart from a few dreary lectures, we were pretty much left to our own devices, the calm before the storm, it was generally referred to, and so it was with some interest that I learned that the Training Colleges Music Department was in the habit of producing annually an opera, and this particular year, it was to be

Vaughan Williams *Hugh the Drover* of which I had never heard. Nevertheless, I went off and auditioned for the Head of Music - Harry Luscombe (a not unimportant figure in musical N.Z. at that time) who having ascertained that I possessed a serviceable High F, accorded me the role of the villain John the Butcher, and requested that I do the sets, to which I readily agreed. Memory tells me that this was a pretty good production. I was quite at home with V.W's musical idiom (although he could at times write the odd awkward interval) and have been an enthusiast for his music ever since, and by association, other English music, which I probably would not have got around to until much later.

Our cast was uniformly good - Mary the heroine anxious to get away from her stifling village, was sung by Jill Evans who looked the part, and possessed a soaring lyric soprano which put her in line for a scholarship for overseas study, which if it didn't eventuate in no way diminished the quality of her performance. Hugh (tenor) would probably been more at home in oratorio but he was musical and maintained a good singing line and if he lacked the final third of the tenor range, some judicious and sensitive re-writing around the notes he didn't have, prevented too much damage being done to V.W's original. Aunt Jane was sung by a girl with a most beautiful satiny contralto and the ballad singer by a young Maori tenor with a honeyed quality of voice, such as I don't think I have heard either before or since. The constable was musical with a loud unmusical voice, but with a comic persona that ensured that he stole virtually every scene in which he appeared. And last but not least and lurking in the chorus was Donald McIntyre, forbidden at that time to do any solo work until given the OK by his then teacher, the formidable Hubert Milverton Carta. The OK came the following year when the Training College mounted Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien*, Don sang the title role, James Robertson conductor of the NZBC orchestra was in the audience; a scholarship was arranged and Donald McIntyre was on his way.

Back to the *Drover*. There were one or two blips - the first concerning the boxing match which is central to the plot where Hugh the Drover challenges John the Butcher for the hand of Mary. This was a worry for our Hugh (Graham Dreadon) who stated several times that he was not an aggressive person, and so the gentle poke in the direction of my chin that caused me to keel over as if struck by a length of pig iron did cause some hilarity on the part of the audience. The other was when I went spectacularly out of tune in an unaccompanied passage, creative pitching I called it and anyway the character was supposed to be drunk at the time.

Apart from these, it was a good production and when the chairman of the Auckland Festival Committee came to see it, he declared it an ideal opera to be the centrepiece of the 1955 Auckland Festival. To that end he brought over Powell Lloyd an ex Sadler's Wells singer turned producer to produce, and

Ronald Dowd from Australia to sing the title role which he did beautifully with the right amount of lyricism and dramatic power that it required. I was always sorry that he never recorded it, the two existing complete recordings both suffer from inadequate singing of the title role, and one has to go back to 78s issued after the premier in 1925 with Tudor Davies as Hugh to hear how it should go.

I loved doing the opera and the chance to work with others to a common purpose. But among the pleasant thoughts, some slightly disturbing ones began to make their appearance. I was still playing rugby at that time and could perhaps I wondered swap the violence of the rugby field for the violence of the operatic stage? Anyway I would have to start saving my pennies!

Following the completion of the Training College Year, I remained in Auckland, joined the Dorian choir (conductor Harry Luscombe), found myself a singing teacher whose own teacher had been the celebrated Amand Crabbé, and did a couple of musicals.

And so it came to pass that when in January 1958 I boarded the NZ Shipping Lines elderly *Rangitata* and set sail en route for the U.K. the spans of the newly under construction Auckland Harbour Bridge projected some 100 yards not meters from each shore.

(ACT TWO)

The trip was uneventful. The sea was calm, various shipboard activities were entered into, a concert party was formed, and a great deal of duty free free grog was drunk. Eventually we hit Curacao (a Dutch protectorate at the top of South America) and then Panama, spending a day in each, and on through the Canal, emerging at the other end to find the calm of the Pacific had been replaced by the chop of the Atlantic.

We sailed on and I recall seriously wondering if this place called England actually existed, but eventually I awoke one morning to find the ships engines stilled, and on looking out the porthole saw for the first time the green hills of England as we cruised up the Estuary on the way to dock at Southampton, and there to catch the boat train to London. I remember looking on in awe at the uniformity of the houses and their grey slate roofs that echoed the contours of the land on which they were built.

In the time honoured fashion of antipodean visitors, I headed for Earl's Court (Snake Gully as it was called) obtained a room and within a week had seen two operas featuring singers I knew from records - *William Tell* with Bechi, Fillipeschi and Fineschi and the *Pearl Fishers* with Tagliavini and Savarese.



Albert Hall sketch by Roger Hart.

PROGRAMME

Sunday 18th February 2006

The records selected to be played today, were chosen from my collection after I had read *A Matter of Records* by Jerrold Northrop Moore. This is a biography of Fred Gaisberg, an American whose dedication and commitment to the recording industry for all his life, was one which record collectors and lovers of music should be eternally grateful. Some of the records played today were actually supervised by Gaisberg. The final part of the programme takes a more light hearted approach to records in my collection. I hope you enjoy the items I have prepared for you this afternoon.

- | | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Gaskin Geo. D. (vocal) | Dixie
w.piano | 14 Oct. 1896 | Berliner 942
Washington D.C. |
| 2. | Allen, Percival (sop.) | Night (Ronald)-
w. piano | 1901 | G&T 3255
London |
| 3. | Plancon, P. (bs.) | du Tambour Major(Le Caid)
w. piano | March 1902 | G&T 2-2664
London |
| 4. | Caruso, Enrico (ten.) | Questo o quella (Rigoletto)
w. piano | March 1902 | G&T 52344
Milan |
| 5. | Chaliapine, T. (bs.) | Arise Red Sun (trad.)
w. choir | 18 August 1910 | HMV 022187
Moscow |
| 6. | Prouse, John (bar.) | Ther's a Land (Allitsen)
w.piano | | G&T 3-2357
London |

INTERVAL

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|--------|---------------------|
| 7. | Ziehrer's Orch | Wiener Blut (Strauss)
Orchestra | c.1901 | G&T 40557
Vienna |
| 8. | Sabajno, Carlo (con.) | Prelude - Act 3 (Lohengrin)
Orchestra | c.1908 | GC 50555
Milan |

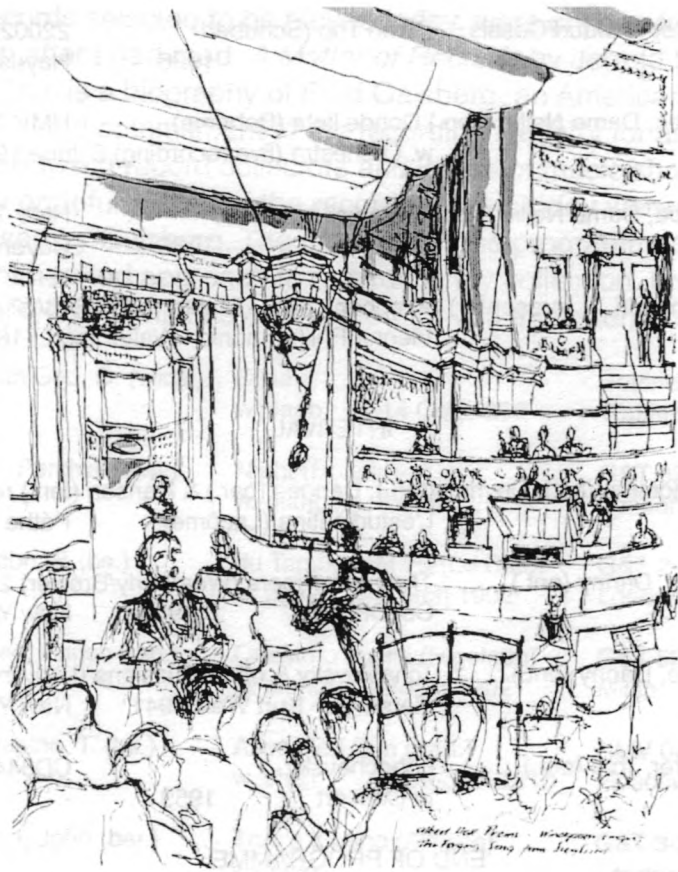
- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|--|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 9. | Elgar, Sir E. (con.) | Wild Bear (Wand of Youth Suite)
HMV 2-0729 | Feb. 1917 | Hayes |
| 10. | Coates, Albert (con.) | Pilgrims Chorus - Act 3 (Tannhauser)
Early electric recording | 1925 | HMV D.1074
Hayes |
| 11. | Cortot/Thibaud/Casals | Piano Trio (Schubert)
1926 | | 220025
Hayes |
| 12. | Melba, Dame Nellie (sop.) | Donde lieta (Bohème)
w. Orchestra (live recording) | 8 June 1926 | HMV 7ER 5201
C.Gdn. |
| 13. | Melba, Dame Nellie (sop.) | Farewell speech.
1926 | | HMV 7ER 5201
Covent Garden |
| 14. | Hampson, T. (presenter) | Symphony no.9 - Mahler
Vienna Philharmonic - Walter (con.) | | PB 3613/22
16 Jan 1938 |

INTERVAL

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---------|------------------------|
| 15. | Belhomme (bs.), Devries (ten.), Danges (bar.) & Nansen (ten.) | rec.1910/11
L'estudiantina (Lacôme) | | Páthe 2584 |
| 16. | Kaye, Danny (ent.) | The Fairy Pipers (Weatherly/Brewer)
Col.DB 2481 | c.1940s | 221310-303
New York |
| 17. | Kaye, Danny (ent.) | Tchaikovsky & other Russians (Lady in the Dark)
Gershwin - Kurt Weill | 1941 | New York |
| 18. | Lehrer, Tom (ent.) | Lobochevsky
In Concert | 1959 | CD844 241-2
- |

END OF PROGRAMME

FOOTNOTE: According to all the notes I have kept on the programmes I have presented over the years, this is the third time I have included the Percival Allen's Night and Plancon's Le Caid. It should also be noted that I think this is the first time I have included Wagnerian items in my selection. Is this a sign of old age or is it a divine revelation.?



Albert Hall sketch by Roger Hart.

They were part of a visiting company appearing at the Drury Lane Theatre. Bechi sang well but Fineschi had a cold and Tagliavini was past it. In fact the best applause came in *W. Tell* when Alicia Markova prima ballerina at the C.G. ballet improbably emerged complete with tutu from a group of Swiss peasants and performed one of those meaningless ballet solos, which nevertheless brought the house down.

After a few weeks at Earl's Court, I obtained digs at East Putney, where I was to learn much later dwelt the celebrated English born tenor and star of the Vienna State Opera Alfred Piccaver then living in retirement and doing some teaching. He had been guest of honour at the re-opening of the Vienna State Opera in 1955.

The next few months were spent exploring London and what it had to offer - The National and Tate Galleries were high on the list, also Covent Garden and Sadlers Wells, not to mention the Royal Festival and Albert Halls. I remember a *Gerontius* at the latter were the full chorus, organ and orchestra would cause the building to shake. The Albert Hall was of course host to the yearly Prom Concerts, and I heard many good things there including a Wagner evening with two of the leading Wagnerians of the day Martha Mödl and Wolfgang Windgassen, and a memorable *Lied von der Erde* with Grace Hoffmann and Richard Lewis.

Although I have sub-titled this article 'How I got to the Guildhall'. I can't actually remember how I did. Somewhere along the line I must have put in an application form and received a reply requesting me to present myself at such and such a date for an audition (probably June or July, as the academic year in England begins in September). And so it was that I found myself standing in front of the rather formidable edifice of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama just across Blackfriars Bridge, and one block back from the Embankment.

I was duly called and entered a large room to be confronted by the then head of the Guildhall, Edric Cundell and several others sitting at a long trestle table. I don't remember what I sang, but it must have gone alright because I was asked to return in two days to do an exam in musical theory, plus a sight singing test which I did. This was evidently surmounted because in due course I received notification of my acceptance, and was informed that I would be having two half hour singing lessons a week, one half hour drama lesson and that my singing teacher would be Arthur Fear.

On my way out after the audition, I had a look at the inevitable student notice board, which contained among other things, notices advertising accommodation for music students, and I decided to check out one situated in

Camberwell S.E.5. This had a third floor attic room which proved very acceptable and I lived in it for the remainder of my time in London. It was also a fortunate choice for if I stood at the ground floor entrance, 500 yards to the left, down Church Street was the Camberwell School of Art and Printing and approximately 1.5 miles to the right down Camberwell Road was Kennington Oval, home of the Surrey Country Cricket Club, then in one of its great periods with players such as May, Barrington, Bedser, Laker, Lock and Loader. I would often go down and watch for a couple of hours.

I decided to have a look at the Camberwell School of Art and Printing, which seemed much as one would expect, but my eye was taken by some student work on the wall which impressed, wood engraving done under the tutorship of Frank Martin, one of the leading engravers in the country. This was something I decided I would like to know more about; so I applied and got in on a part-time basis I think for I was able to fit in both Guildhall and the School of Art comfortably.

In the meantime Opera going continued, and I particularly remember Verdi's *Don Carlos* which was chosen for Covent Garden's 200th anniversary. Guilini conducted, Visconti produced and the singers were Gré Brouwenstijn, Barbieri, Vickers, Gobbi and Christoff, a wonderful cast and it remains probably the best all round production I ever saw. Fortunately, I have it recorded live on four LPs. A less desirable aspect was having to pick one's way through assorted Rolls Royce's and Bentley's parked all over the place and not there for *Don Carlos*, but for the opening of *My Fair Lady* just around the corner at Drury Lane Theatre, and all the best people were there to see and be seen. There was a similar effusion of expensive hardware when Callas gave a concert at the Royal Festival Hall in 1963. Apparently you could park where you liked if you had a Roller or a Bentley.

And so to the Guildhall. With some trepidation I duly arrived, and on stepping into the foyer noticed a large board with panels indicating which tutor was in that day and which wasn't and gazing down the names noticed those of Dennis Noble Norman Walker, Oda Slobodskaya and Walter Hyde, all names I knew. Walking up to the 1st floor, I encountered Dennis Noble whom I recognised from photos; the first time I had seen a recorded voice walking around to speak. I passed the various studios from which emanated vocal and instrumental sounds of varying quality and arrived at the designated one and duly met Arthur Fear, a pleasant man of medium height. He asked me about myself and I must have mentioned *Hugh the Drover* for this brought forth a laugh and he made reference to a performance in which the tenor and the baritone, thoroughly disliking each other anyway, turned the boxing match into an all in brawl, and they had to be separated by the chorus. He didn't mention any names.

Lessons got underway and after a few weeks, he startled me somewhat by saying that my voice reminded him of Walter Widdop and that I should be singing tenor. Flattered as I was, I was not all certain that I wanted to sing tenor, remembering a comment by a singer friend in N.Z. about the number of rich voiced baritones that left for further study in the U.K. only to return as strangled tenors. I knew that baritone to tenor was nothing new. There were examples where it had worked and others where it hadn't, in fact I had been listening to an example of the latter very recently at Covent Garden. Ex baritone Ramon Vinay had been the reigning Otello for ten years but by 1959 he had passed his use by date, and hearing him struggling with the role of Tristan with only half a voice was not pleasant. His Isolde, the Australian Sylvia Fisher was also in bad vocal shape, but strangely enough this performance turned into a very moving experience, the emotional impact exceeding the later much better sung one I heard with Nilsson and Windgassen.

Anyway, aware that my low notes were never going to be anything special, I agreed, only to find that singing tenor just meant singing higher. I was already conscious of faulty production in the *passaggio* area Eb, E, F and F#, and those notes correctly sung are the key to the head voice, incorrectly sung they can give you a sore throat. No instruction was forthcoming. However I have alluded to all this in the past so I went on about it!

Further down the track, I began to notice that when I left at the end of each lesson, standing outside and waiting to go in was a worried looking clergyman. I didn't take a lot of notice at first, but as he was there week after week and the worried look was intensifying, I asked Arthur about him. He was it seemed Church of England where chanting is part of the ritual, and he was having problems with pitch. He was there to see if Arthur could help. He would speak as in a sermon, then chant, an example might be "O God make speed to save us" with "Speed" sung up a tone and back to the original pitch. This the poor man could not do and it was disastrous for the choir who had to pitch their response to that of the cantor. Those with perfect pitch would no doubt sing the correct pitch, those without would sing the given pitch and it must all have ended up sounding a bit like a vocal version of the Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra, who at about that time were becoming notorious by playing the classics slightly out of tune. Anyway, one day he wasn't there and I'm afraid I never learned the outcome.

One of the pleasures I used to indulge was repairing to the Gramophone Exchange in Wardour Street, Soho and browsing through their huge stock of 78s and on one particular occasion I came across two by Arthur Fear, two pieces from *Elijah* one from *Messiah* and one from *Mastersinger*. I took them

home and played them and thought I had never before heard a baritone voice of such richness emanating from an Anglo-Saxon throat. I mentioned the records to Arthur but he rather dismissed them saying that he was very young when he made them. All this suggested a scenario. He was Welsh and probably a 'natural', requiring little in the way of training, which could explain his apparent lack of technical knowledge, that he had been a brilliant student at the Royal Academy of Music, been snapped up by the Carl Rosa Opera Coy and given inappropriate roles too soon. (Mastersingers perhaps). I know he created a role in Goosen's opera *Judith* at Covent Garden, and sang Gunther in HMVs 1930 attempt at recording a truncated but more or less complete *Ring Cycle*. Then in 1936 came *Casanova* at the Coliseum.

This was a patchwork type work cobbled together from various Johann Strauss melodies in much the same way as *Blossom Time* had been done with Schubert pieces. The big song was the Nun's Chorus which used to be a staple of 2ZBs requests programme sung by Anni Frind and Dame Kiri made considerable use of it in the Sister Mary Leo days. The role of Casanova was given to the Italian bass Fernando Autori, whose vocal qualities were not in question, but apparently no one checked out his physical appearance (how English) and when this large portly middle aged man appeared, it was realised that he was not suitable for, of all roles, that of Casanova. He apparently sang a few performances and was packed off back to Italy.

The History of the Coliseum goes on to say "the show was greatly improved by the appearance of Arthur Fear in the title role". The role was apparently a strenuous one involving spoken dialogue (always tiring) and as there were eight performances a week including two matinees, an understudy was engaged to do the matinees. The show ran for some six months and for the final night, curtain calls were arranged so that Arthur Fear would take the final one on his own as he was entitled to do. However the understudy, evidently felt he should be allowed to share the final call and apparently there was some sympathy for this among the chorus. Arthur rejected this stating that the final night belonged to him and it was left at that. Came the final night, Arthur came on for his call and from the other side of the stage came the understudy and they met in the middle. A scuffle ensued and a punch was thrown and the resonant tones of Dame Edith Evans was heard from the audience intoning that she "never expected to see such a thing on an English Stage"!

I mentioned this to Arthur, he laughed and said the whole thing had been blown up out of all proportion, but added that he had sued the *Daily Express* and "my wife and I had a very nice holiday on Capri with the proceeds"!

Many years later back home in N.Z. and having a few vocal problems, I

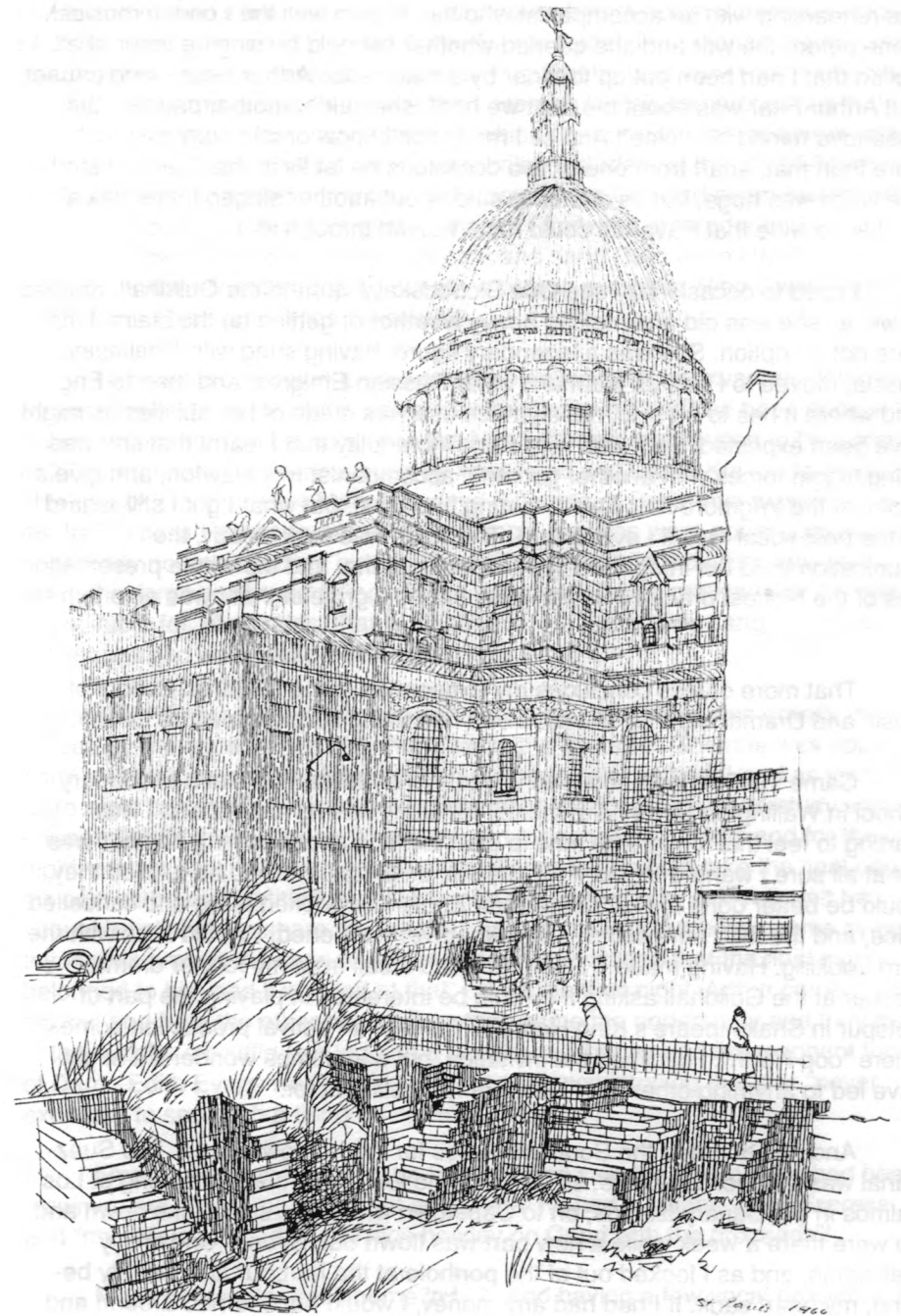
was rehearsing with an accompanist who had known well the London musical scene before the war and she queried whether I should be singing tenor at all. I replied that I had been put up to tenor by a man called Arthur Fear - long pause! "But Arthur Fear was about the best we had", she said - another pause, "but Casanova ruined his voice"! And so I really don't know or can surmise much more than that, apart from one or two occasions he let fly in the Guildhall studio. The voice was huge, but as one critic said about another singer, there was a wobble so wide that Pavarotti could have walked through it!

I used to occasionally see Oda Slobodskaya around the Guildhall, moving slowly as she was old and making heavy weather of getting up the stairs. Lifts were not an option. She was a legendary figure, having sung with Chaliapine in Russia, moved to Paris as did many other Russian Emigres, and then to England where it has to be said, not as much use was made of her abilities as might have been expected. So it was with some incredulity that I learnt that she was going to join forces with another geriatric; accompanist Ivor Newton, and give a recital at the Wigmore hall. I went fearing the worst, but what I got I still regard as the best vocal recital I ever heard. The voice was rock steady, the enunciation vivid but integrated into the musical line, and the whole presentation was of the highest order. I always feel supremely grateful that I was able to hear it.

That more or less concludes my experience of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, but they did have one remaining surprise in store for me.

Came 1963, I had been teaching for nearly three years at a secondary school in Wallington Surrey, the money for study having run out and I was starting to feel that it might be time to start thinking about coming home. I was not at all sure I wanted to, but if my graphic ambitions were to be fulfilled they would be better done in N.Z. rather than England. I booked twice and cancelled twice, and the third time decided that whatever happened, I would stick with the third booking. Having made it I then received a call from my former drama teacher at the Guildhall asking if I would be interested in playing the part of Hotspur in Shakespeare's King Henry IV Part I in a Festival production somewhere "oop North". I declined the invitation, but sometimes wonder if it might have led to anything other than just another resting actor.

And so I boarded the Southern Cross for the homeward run. The Suez Canal was not then available, so we went the long way round, stopping at Los Pamos in the Canary Islands, on to Capetown where the ship broke down and we were there a week while a new part was flown out; Sydney and finally Wellington, and as I looked out of the porthole at the harbour and the city beyond, my heart sank. If I had had any money, I would have turned around and gone straight back!



Front and back cover: Sketches by Roger Hart.