

G&T GAZETTE

Established 1995. Incorporating the *Edison Echo*

April/May/June

2008



Can you identify the following members in this 2003 painting based on a 1990s meeting of the group at 93 Burma Road by "Wiremu"? Ray Hedges, John Sutcliffe, Neil & Betty McDonald, Alistair Gilkinson, George Boroman, Peter Fry, Roger Hart, David Morriss, Pat Byrnes, Leland Crosthwait, Des Wilson & Jill & Bill Main and Don Laing.

ORIGINS OF THE SRG

by Bill Main

It all began when I placed a classified advertisement in Wellington's EVENING POST on Saturday, 28th June 1958. It was in the Personal Column and read "Edison to electrical era 1896 to 1925, persons interested in the above historical recorded music period tel. 86-742 or 51-577". The second phone number was Fred Spencer's, a person who'd been very kind to me when I'd advertised for an Edison phonograph. From memory there were several responses so before the year was out we had held a couple of meetings at my place in Newtown.

Although I'm a bit vague as to who attended these preliminary gatherings, I'm pretty sure both Fred Spencer and Charlie Lindsay put in appearances along with John Simpson, Alan Sadd, Ray Hedges and a woman called Ingha Kahn? The following year, Michael Woolf joined our merry band and we started rotating meetings in one another's homes. At first we were nameless, but after we had helped Charlie Lindsay mount a convention for Phonograph and Record Collectors at the Dominion Museum over Labour Day Weekend in October 1963, there was a gradual move towards a formalisation concerning our activities. This was caused by a consensus for us to rotate our annual conferences between Wellington and Christchurch. These continued until 1973, by which time those running the venue in Christchurch had formed themselves into the Vintage Phonograph Society of N.Z. (Inc.). For reasons which I am unable to explain, it seems we agreed to become a chapter of this organisation in time for the final Wellington convention which we staged in 1973. We discontinued the use of this 'Chapter' title beyond that point and as a consequence Wellington fell by the wayside as a venue for these conventions.

About this time, Roger Hart's daughter Emma is credited with giving us our name when she was heard to refer to her father's friends coming together in their house to play "Scratchy Records". And so this has stuck ever since.

The most incredible thing to emerge from all of this in my opinion is the fact that while the Christchurch group always promoted the mechanical aspects of collecting Phonographs and Recordings Wellington differed by preferring records to apparatus. Apart from periodic bursts of enthusiasm from Wellington stalwarts like Jack Root, Don Cameron and Mitt Howard to democratise our activities with a secretary and rules from Christchurch, we have run very smoothly without encumbrances and it would seem will continue this way until the end of time.

As for the future! Although our ranks gradually diminish and show little hope of any rejuvenation, we have left some very definite footprint of who we are and what we represent. Through my activities as an unofficial commentator, some of our activities have been recorded through the pages of the G&T Gazette, which has acted independently for thirteen years as a chronicle of the group. As well, there is this present CD which will leave no one in any doubt about our interests and involvement in recorded music.

What are the essential ingredients that have kept us going all these years. Is it simply a bunch of people with similar interests? If it is, then it must surely qualify as one of the most peculiar forms of socialising that exists. Or is it a love of music combined with a bit of food and wine that motivates us! At one of our meetings you might hear two people discussing the merits of one take over another from a particular recording session, or a light hearted jest about a Hawaiian guitar recording of a jazz standard! I will never be able to define the magical mix which keeps us going. Not that it's all fizz and bubbles. We have been known to occasionally dwell on matters that concern the fate of our collections, a topic which brings a brief shadow cast over events. A few over the years have left our group in high dudgeon while others have been known to take a 'sabbatical' from our company only to return in the fullness of time, rejuvenated and invigorated by the break away.

Whatever the mix and blend of individuals or their interests in recorded music, let us be grateful for the joy the Scratchy Record Group gives us all. Long may it continue

PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE SCRATCHY RECORD GROUP

Members were asked to supply a 150 word thumbnail biography and short description on how they became involved in collecting records.

Bill Main provided the notes for deceased members.

Charles John LINDSAY 1902 - 1966

C.J. Lindsay (Charlie) was born in Frome, Somerset and emigrated to New Zealand in 1922. In 1924 he moved from Christchurch to Wellington to take up a position as curator for the Wellington City Council Museum in Newtown. Two years later he transferred to the Dominion Museum as taxidermist, a position he was to hold for the next 40 years. I first got to know him in the late 1950s through Fred Spencer. Together we initiated the first gathering of those who collected and played old gramophones and phonographs. This gathering was staged at the Dominion Museum in 1964. He was very fond of Edison Blue Amberol cylinder recordings many of which he acquired for the museum's collection along with machines that could play them. He suffered a heart attack while at work.

Fred SPENCER

Was a plumber by trade who lived in Lorne Street, Wellington. Fred was one of the first to answer my classified advertisement in Saturdays Evening Post 21 June 1958. At the time I had no car and Fred offered to drive me to those who'd responded to the advertisement wanting to sell or dispose of old phonographs and recordings. He suffered a stroke in the 1960s and died shortly after. His collection was sold by Karl Sim of Foxton. Fred idolised Thomas Alva Edison, His room in Lorne Street was lined with cylinders and machines, including an Opera phonograph which played superbly. Fred was very fond of all the Edison artists including the counter tenor Will Oakland and the soprano Elizabeth Spencer. One which I heard him play several times was the Frank Croxton quartet singing 'Bella figlia dell'amore' from Rigoletto. It was sung in English. Fred knew every word and would softly sing along as it played.

Donald(Don) CAMERON 1949-2002

Don Cameron was at Onslow College when he attended the Phonograph and Record Collectors Convention at the Dominion Museum in May 1965. He became our Programme Organiser in the early 1970s while working for Whitcombe and Tombs where he ran the Technical Books Department. Don and his wife moved to Melbourne in the early 1980s. He became a book representative trading under the name of Lochiel Books. During a visit to Wellington in 2000 he gave a programme of instrumental recordings at Des Wilsons place He died suddenly in Melbourne in 2002. Don will be remembered for his association with the well known pianist of the 1920s & 1930s Gil Dech who moved to Wellington in his retirement.

Ray HEDGES (1917-2000)

Ray was one of the first to join our group in 1958. Rays passion for collecting records was equalled if not excelled by his love of the theatre. During his lifetime he must have witnessed every major theatrical company that came to New Zealand. As well he acted in and directed plays and operas in and around Wellington for many years starting in the 1930s. When he moved into a private nursing home in the late 1990s, members of our group saw to it that he was always collected and delivered to our meetings. His favourite artist would undoubtedly be Gladys Moncrieff.

Doug GALBRAITH

Is remembered for two things. First was his complete surprise and wonderment in discovering that there were others like himself who lived in Wellington and loved to listen to records from the past. Then there was the story he told about the time he was working on the West Coast of the South Island and how he made a special order to secure a copy from HMV's No.2 Historic Record Catalogue of Adelina Patti singing Robin Adair. It duly arrived in Greymouth to be transported home on the carrier of his bicycle and subsequently played to his neighbours from a gramophone situated on his verandah.

Stan NORTHCOTE-BADE

Stan came became associated with our group because of connections with the Dominion Museum where he was Honorary Curator in Colonial Fur-

niture. He attended our 1973 conference and joined shortly afterwards. Although Stan didn't have a vast collection of records, he took great pleasure in hosting us at his house in Upper Hutt. He always played his record of G.H. Snazelle whenever he entertained along with a selection of Edison cylinders. He was a keen vintage car enthusiast.

William MAIN (Bill) 1934 -

I bought my first serious record in 1955 when Begg's in Christchurch reduced the price of their 78s dramatically. I paid 3/6 (reduced by 5/-) for Chaliapine singing the Serenade and Calf of Gold from Gounod's Faust on HMV DB 1437, which was recorded in Paris in 1930. This was bought because I was entranced by Ezio Pinza playing Chaliapine in 'Tonight We Sing', a film on the life of impresario Sol Hurok. In recent years, I have tended to specialise in two topics, the ballads of Carl Loewe and the recordings of Heinrich Schlusnus. Therefore my choice of him singing the very popular Loewe ballad Tom der Reimer will come as no surprise to those who know me well.

Des WILSON

Des's life-long interest in old records began when as a child he played through his father's record collection which had been assembled in the 1920's. As soon as he earned his first pocket money he began buying records and is still doing so. His 78 collection concentrates on vocal records - opera, lieder, ballads, music hall and personality performers in general. Richard Tauber has always been one of his favourite singers and he thinks that this is one of his finest operatic recordings.

Leland CROSTHWAIT

I am not particularly musical or have a great musical knowledge (not like most of those who go to the group) and have never bought many new records but one I did buy was the 78 record of Joseph Schmidt singing "Heut ist der schonste Tag in Meinem Leben".

Betty McDONALD 1931 -

I have always loved music and as a child listened to the radio and joined in the many sing-alongs with my parents and grandparents. I started to learn singing at the age of fourteen under the tuition of Mrs Crawford, of

upper Cuba St. in Wellington, and continued until 1954 when married life took precedence. I sang in many local singing competitions in Wellington and the Hutt Valley, winning three silver medals and many certificates. At the beginning of my singing career I joined the Junior Philharmonic Society run by Assheton-Harbord singing in concert party shows and was the Principal Boy in the pantomime Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves produced by Assheton-Harbord in 1947. In 1946 I entered the Clarion Junior Talent Quest reaching the semi-finals. The two highlights in my singing career were taking the part in Carmen (actors Janet Howe and Arthur Servant) of a cigarette factory worker who had a fight with Carmen, and in Aida as an Ethiopian slave.

Neil McDONALD 1940 -

I have always enjoyed "nice" music but never really knew much about the artists. I had heard of names like Caruso, Mario Lanza, and John McCormack and greatly enjoyed their music, but names like Gigli, Elisabeth Schumann, Paul Robeson, Clara Butt, Kathleen Ferrier, Lilli Lehmann, Lotte Lehmann and the like were all foreign names and meant nothing to me until Betty and I joined the Scratchy Record Group in 1997. Then a whole new world of classical music opened up for me and at the same time re-kindled Betty's interest in the classics of yesteryear. Thank you to all who belong to the S.R.G. for bringing the world of classical music into our hearts.

Peter FRY

An active member of the group since the early 1970s, I was born in London and inherited a love of music, singing especially, from my parents. I acquired my first '78s' as a teenager and my collection now consists of more than two thousand early discs, mostly opera, operetta and song, but also music-hall (vaudeville), musical comedy and dance-bands. They are usually played on my 1930 English Columbia Grafonola 156a wind-up gramophone. I also draw regularly from my collection for my Saturday nostalgia programme on Radio New Zealand.

John DANIELS

My introduction to older records came (as I suspect did many others) by way of some old albums of 78s which had belonged to my grandparents.

These dated from the 1920s and included Caruso and Galli-Curci, as well as the usual lighter ballads etc. Later came LPs and the family's purchase of a Pye Black Box record player. My record collecting career was really away, but we still treasured those old 78s, which I still have. My youngest son and I began collecting more 78s in the 1970s. A lot of the dross has been culled over the years but I still love some of it! I joined the Scratchy Record Club in the early 1980s. I thank past and present members for their fellowship and for introducing me to music I may otherwise never have encountered

Don LAING

Don Laing grew up with his father's small collection of 78s, falling in love with the mellow sound of 1920s/30s violins and reedy-voiced popular vocalists. Another early influence was the "Tenor Time" radio show broadcast in the 1950s by Radio 2ZA Palmerston North. He started collecting seriously about 20 years ago and has concentrated on 1920s dance bands and their vocalists, popular classical singers, European light orchestras and early American country music. His favourite musical era is the period 1915-30. Don will also admit to a fascination with pre-1935 Hawaiian music.. He chose Riccardo Stracciari singing the Eri tu aria from Verdi's Masked Ball because of the growling, menacing quality that the singer imparted, particularly in the acoustic version.

Pat BYRNE

My first record was a gift from a class-mate in standard six. It was Oscar Natzke singing Madamina from Mozart's Don Giovanni. I started work in 1951 and whenever I had a few spare shillings I'd head off to Lewis Eady's Ltd and buy a record. Boninsegna's Casta Diva was one which I can recall. My first LP was a 21st birthday present, followed by Butterfly (Tebaldi) and Boheme & Traviata (Toscanini). Time in Australia was followed by a job at the National Museum where I met Bill Main and Michael Woolf and joined the group. This led me to being introduced to Ray Hedges whose collection for a time I attempted to emulate. I chose Ezio Pinza singing "Into the Night" because of the singer's excellent diction and care with the melody.

John SUTCLIFFE

My dear Grandmother was the person who tried to waken an interest in music in me from a young age. I was taken to many live performances of oratorio, concerts and theatre. In the late 1930s on a weekly basis, she also took me to a variety theatre where we saw the leading acts of the day. My appreciation of music did not develop until later in my life, since then I have been able to bring to life recordings that I listen to. The reason for my selection of "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" for inclusion in the CD is that this piece reminds me of my grandmother. The Ninon Vallin recording was her favourite which she played frequently.

George BOROMAN

It began when Jane's cousin, Pixie Costello nee Williams - the first singer to record in NZ in 1948, asked if I could find an early record of hers. I still haven't succeeded in finding the one she wanted, but I got hooked. N.Z. 78s were what appealed initially-- there weren't many of them and there were no catalogues but often they weren't musically satisfying. I went with Don Laing to a talk by Brian Salkeld on 78s and there met John Sutcliffe who talked about our group. So we both went along to a meeting. I like listening to the music at these gatherings but also to the informal contributions of knowledge from within the group.

Brian BLACKFORD 1943 -

The first LP I ever bought was of Acker Bilk. On the other hand the first 78 was Wagner! Musical attainments on my part were scaling the giddy heights of Grade 2 violin and Grade 4 piano. But playing the gramophone and making electrical reproducing equipment have been longer



lasting interests. During the 1960s I collected LPs in great variety, finding the "second golden age" of the gramophone which included a Decca "London" which I bought in Baltimore, USA, which is my chosen item for this CD. I joined the group in 1994 and have found that although my inclination remains towards non vocal music, meetings have been a great help for maintaining a broad musical outlook with friends from other occupational backgrounds.

Roger HART

My record collecting started with my first opera - Rigoletto given by the touring Italian Opera Company in 1949. The following day I went rapidly to the local record shop to buy everything they had from Rigoletto, only to find they didn't have anything. However I did the next best thing and went home with Joan Cross singing 'One Fine Day' from Madame Butterfly! For the next few years I did the second hand shops with some success, but eventually decided I lacked the zeal of the true collector and was happy to embrace the LP Historical re-issues when they eventually arrived in N.Z. some years after their appearance overseas. However I did enjoy some of the old labels, the Quartet from Rigoletto and the 'Soldiers Chorus' from Faust were two discs that come to mind.

Les AUSTIN

Les Austin is a New Zealander who spent the greater part of his working life overseas. During this time he heard and saw many of the greatest performers in the concert hall and opera house of the 60's, 70's and 80's. Since his return to retire in his native country he has been closely involved in the promotion of musical events, especially in Wellington. He has always been a keen record collector, having had successively extensive collections of 78's, LP's, and now CD's and DVD's. His particular interests are the symphonic repertoire and opera. He chose the Simon Boccanegra excerpt because he thinks it is a good demonstration of the very high standard of operatic singing at the time.

David MORRISS and Mel WALKER did not supply their copy in time for publication

SCRATCHY RECORD GROUP - 50TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

Saturday 21 st June 2008

Sharella Motel - Opposite Gates of Botanical Gardens - Use the car park next to motel.

11-30 am

Bar opens for private function. Members start to arrive & view special display of memorabilia.(further loaned contributions required)

12-15 pm

We move into the dining room and are seated (no specific order or seating arrangements).

12-30 pm

Welcoming Address.

12-40 pm

First course served.

1 pm

Valedectories

Bill Main - Fred Spencer & Charlie Lindsay
Peter Fry - Stan Northcote-Bade & Doug Galbraith
Des Wilson - Don Cameron & Ray Hedges.

1-15 pm

Second course served.

1-45 pm

Release and distribution of the Commemorative CD with a few words by Brian Blackford.

2-00 pm

Third & final course served.

2-15 pm

Special entertainment.

2-30 pm

Coffee served.

3 pm

Function ends.

The lunch will cost in the vicinity of \$30 per person. Drinks are extra.

SCRATCHY RECORD GROUP COMMEMORATIVE CD [SRG 1]

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| 1. Frank Croxton Quartet (1) | Fairest daughter (Rigoletto) Edison Blue Amberol 1528 1912 Fred Spencer |
| 2. Band | Invercargill (Lithgow) Edison Blue Amberol 1810 c1913 Chas. Lindsay |
| 3. Adelina Patti | Robin Adair (Old Scot. Air) G & T O3059** 1905 Doug Galbraith |
| 4. G H Snazelle | A whistling yarn Zonophone 1114 1906 Stan Northcote-Bade |
| 5. Gil Dech | Remembrance Regal/Zono G 21186 1931 Don Cameron |
| 6. Gladys Moncrieff | Love will find a way Columbia O1784* 1928 Ray Hedges |
| 7. Richard Tauber | Dalla sua pace (Don Giovanni) Odeon JXX81067* 1922 Des Wilson |
| 8. Heinrich Schlusnus | Tom der Reimer (Loewe) Polydor 67212 1938 Bill Main |
| 9. Quintet(2) | Plébe! Patrizi! (Simon Boccanegra) Victor 15642* 1939 Les Austin |
| 10. Joseph Joachim | Adagio - Sonata No.1 in G Minor (Bach)* 204y 1903 David Morriss |
| 11. Ezio Pinza | Into the night (Edwards) Columbia LC35 1945 Pat Byrne |
| 12. Ninon Vallin | Si mes vers avaient des ailes Pathe X93074** 1928 John Sutcliffe |
| 13. John McCormack | Ah! moon of my delight Victor 74232* 1911 John Daniels |
| 14. ECO/Hurwitz | Symphony No 1 1st mvnt (Boyce) London STS15013 1966 Brian Blackford |
| 15. Fischer-Dieskau | Nachtstück, D672 (Schubert) HMV LP* 1958 Roger Hart |
| 16. Oscar Denes/Lizzie Waldmüller | Mausie (Viktoria and her Hussar) HMV B3946 1930 Peter Fry |
| 17. Riccardo Stracciari | Eri tu (Un Ballo in Maschera) Columbia 7165* 1917 Don Laing |
| 18. Joseph Schmidt | Today is the happiest day of my life Parl. A6858* 1935 Leland Crosthwait |
| 19. Mina Foley | Nuns' Chorus (Casanova) Stebbing SLP 1009* 1960 Betty & Neil McDonald |
| 20. Malcom McEachern | Lucy Long (Hilliam) Col. DB1017** |
- * Dubbed from a CD
 ** Dubbed from an LP
 (1) Kimball (soprano), Van Der Vere (contralto), Miller (tenor) & Croxton (bass).
 (2) Tibbett (baritone), Bampton(soprano), Martinelli (tenor), Nicholson & Warren (baritones) & Chorus.

The *G&T Gazette* is published quarterly and distributed gratis to friends and associates who attend or share in the interest 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. 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 93 Burma Road, Wellington - 6035 New Zealand. Telephone (04)971-3535, e-mail <wmain@paradise.net.nz> This edition was proof read and edited by Des Wilson.