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Left to right: Bert Cadman, Dennis Brew and Robin Watt, three record collectors photographed in Auckland in 1979

“Records and music are like food for me. They have always been a huge part of my life, and will remain so. Nearly every day I spend 3-4 hours listening to a 78/LP/CD. I must say that in recent years I am a born again 78 man - the best CD or LP transfer does not capture the bloom of the voice that comes from a 78 played on good equipment. Besides, it is thrilling to handle a rare shellac disc. It’s a strange response, but I can tolerate the constant hiss or crackle from a 78rpm disc, but the regular tick from a lightly scratched LP drives me mad.”

Dennis Brew

EDITORIAL

I'm no prophet! In fact I think that calling me a 'record collector's ghoul' might be more appropriate at this particular juncture.

Here I am barely an issue or two earlier asking you what are you going to do with your record collection when you die and we have one almighty task heaped on us with the death of Dennis Brew, who would undoubtedly have been New Zealand's only internationally known collector. No mean title when you look at the authority with which he wrote in *The Record Collector* on the recorded careers of Piccaver, Rehkemper, Jadlowker and Patzak. He always spoke and wrote his opinions on certain singers with well considered opinions on artists, either through *TRC* or to us directly whenever you met him over the phone or when he addressed us at a special meeting at my place in the early 2000s.

So where do we stand. Overseas dealers only want the eyes of his collection in the form of undoubted rarities which he brought here under his own steam and expense. The transportation of the bulk of the collection prohibits any commercial gain for the purchaser if a bulk sale is brokeraged.

Without demeaning this situation, we all live in a fool's paradise to think that what we've gathered together is a defensible cause if ever there was one. Naturally, I feel that Dennis had every right to state what he might have spent in dollar terms on his acquisitions, let alone the hours he endured in getting to a location to view what was on sale, then transporting it back safely to home base to play and evaluate what he'd purchased. In his case it all mounts up to a lifetime effort in every sense of the word..

Sadly, all this does not register in a commercial world. So it won't be good news on this front when we discover what this collection finally sold for. Of course there is one wild card in this situation - Auckland. This is the place where unexpected situation can arise and I don't think for one minute its not beyond someone to appear from nowhere who might think it a worth while investment owning Dennis's collection. But that surely must be a bad dream outcome!

When rare and original pressings of old gramophone records become as valuable as paintings by artists like Picasso or Braque from the same period, roughly 1900 to 1950, then well be dancing to a different tune. Rare pressings will always have their fascination and value those for who seek what is beautiful in this world like Dennis. What we need to set this off into the fast lane are millionaires with an ear for music and an insight which defies description. If you know of any in my patch, please drop me a line.

Bill Main

HINEMOA ROSIEUR 1912-1940

by George Boraman



In the recent shift to Napier, I came across notes I made of an interview eleven years ago. It concerns a New Zealand soprano Hinemoa Rosieur who showed great potential prior to the beginning of the second world war and her unfortunate death in a bombing raid in London.

It all began when John Sutcliffe rang me one day and asked if I had any records by Hinemoa Rosieur, a singer who was the recipient of the first Melba singing scholarship. I didn't have any and in fact there is considerable uncertainty that she ever made any records. Despite that, my curiosity was aroused so I thought

I'd follow it up and find out as much as I could about her.

It began by meeting up with Jessie Drumm, an 87 year old sister of Hinemoa who lived in Petone. I interviewed her in the company of her son at The Old Flame restaurant in 1999.

At this meeting I was told that Hinemoa's grandfather was Henri Rosieur, a wealthy Frenchman who got involved in a duel and was forced to flee France and was exiled to the Channel Islands. From there he made his way to Australia, where he met and married Margaret Cossill, whose mother was Maori. The Cossill family had a successful publishing business in Sydney but originally came from Mongonui. where they had a farm at Puanui Island. They had six children, the second born John, married Mary Christina Arnold. Together they had nine children the third born was Hinemoa who was born on the 10th of April, 1912.

Hinemoa was named after one of the two ships in Mongonui at the time. Her mother didn't like the name but the grandmother - an overbearing woman - insisted. Hinemoa preferred to be called Mimosa. But in family circles she was simply called Hine. All the family were encouraged to take part in musical activities.

Hinemoa had a natural voice and in her late teens sang in the St. Benedicts choir. At the time Hinemoa was being given singing lessons by Senor Costantini, who was involved with the Puccini Society - a group of Italians who lived in Auckland. Somehow, Hinemoa lived with the Costantini family to learn the language. To support herself Hinemoa worked at Ogilvies Fashions in Queen Street. This firm was very supportive of her, giving her time off as required

Hinemoa may first have been noticed when she entered and won the John Court Aria contest. When the Nellie Melba Memorial Contest was announced, Sr. Costantini pushed hard for a part of the contest to be held in Auckland. Mary Campbell came over to New Zealand to promote the contest where 15 entries were received. The premiere prize which she won was a study course at the Melbourne Conservatorium. During this year she was supported by the family with two uncles generously contributing to her accommodation costs.

During her first year in Melbourne, she expanded her operatic and concert repertoire. Through hard work and continued development, her initial year of study was extended to three. At the end of each year, she would return to New Zealand where she sang at radio stations in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin as well as Auckland. A newspaper clipping of 1935 reported that during this year she had won the Centenary Aria Contest which had been judged by the famous Australian dramatic soprano Florence Austral and the New Zealand born composer Alfred Hill. The final concert for this contest was attended by an audience of 2,600 where she sang Ritorna Vincitor from Aida - "with opulent and well regulated volume and dramatic apprehension". The report continued "There is excellent compass to this voice, a little disturbed in its use of the vibrato, but exceedingly expressive in its

mezza voce". Concluding the report stated, "The singers second choice was the Suicidio from Ponchielli's La Gioconda, which enabled her to express herself with an appealing blend of its dramatic import and its air of resignation".

The *Australian Musical News* of 1 September 1937 notes that Hinemoa's farewell concert before departing for England was delivered, "With the power and texture of voice that nature conferred on her, and the special authority behind her three years study under the terms of the Melba Scholarship." The report then went on to comment on specific items in the programme which was a mix of opera and lieder..

"She is definitely cut out for dramatic soprano work, yet has been wise to concentrate to a large extent on lieder at this stage, as the basis of a vocally refining art. The enlargement of style in Leonora's Prayer from Verdi's La Forza del Destino and likewise in Lia's aria from L'Enfant Prodigue of Debussy displayed Miss Rosieur's special qualifications for intensity of expression. Strangely however she did not give enough of herself in Schubert's Gretchen am Spinnrade. Other songs of his that were performed were Die Forelle and Die Vogel. These were brightly delivered. At times in sostenuto work, especially in the Strauss she reverted to the defect of over-vibration which if one recalls aright, she brought from New Zealand. but overall it was not enough to nullify the feeling in Morgen and the excellent phrasing in Wie Solten wir Gehelm sie Halten".

Another newspaper cutting which survives in the *Australian Musical Review* of 1 August 1939 reported that Hinemoa Rosieur who studied under Miss Muriel Cheek during the Melba Bequest Scholarship is now in England. Recently she sang in an Empire broadcast for the BBC.

Generally it seems she met with modest success in London, singing several times before royalty.

At the outbreak of war Miss Rosieur commenced nursing in a London hospital continuing her musical studies at the same time. She was allegedly the first New Zealand casualty of the war through a German bombing raid on 13 September 1940. A bomb fell directly on the house in which she was living at St. John's Wood. The burial service was conducted by the Rev. R H Hobday, an Anglican minister from Mongonui and a long time family friend who may have been in England acting as her agent. She was buried at the Marylebone Cemetery.

Dennis Brew 1933-2010

Those of us who have been involved in collecting old recordings for some time learnt with sadness of the death of Dennis Brew on the 25th of May after an illness that had dogged him for some time. We have lost someone whom we looked up to and admired for his knowledge and deep understanding he had for the artists he cherished.

I first came to know Dennis through letters which we exchanged in the 1960s. These came about through a gathering of collectors which I and several others instigated with the Dominion Museum, now the Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa. With the backing of the Museum we mounted a gathering of individuals during Labour Day in 1963, called the "Gramophone, Phonograph and Record Collectors' Convention". This was repeated the following year in Christchurch and became a bi-annual event between the two cities until the last one (with Wellington participation) was held in 1973. Dennis made himself known to us at the 1969 Wellington gathering, where he spoke about some of his favourite singers including Carl Burrian, Alfred Piccaver and Hermann Jadlowker. Thinking back to this occasion, I don't know what Dennis must have thought of us at the time. The composition of our group at the time was heavily slanted towards those who collected phonographs and gramophones. As some of us have subsequently found out, it can be very hard having a conversation with those who collect machines as opposed to recordings.

In the beginning, the passion that Dennis had for artists we'd never heard of left us speechless. Many of us at the time were just becoming familiar with famous Italian singers like Caruso and Tetrzzini. Therefore it was a big step to be confronted with singers that were not listed in some of the standard texts on the subject of record collecting. Not that he was in any way dismissive of the Italian school of singing. On the contrary he was very supportive of many 'main stream' artists, but he had a genuine interest in the way other countries developed their

own interpretations and productions of the standard repertoire. Despite this initial gap, we welcomed his views to the point that the final Wellington convention in 1973 saw him scheduled for two sessions featuring eastern European singers and 'Jewish artists of yesteryear'. Unfortunately I can't recall whether or not he was able to attend in person because I have recollections that he sent us a reel to reel tape which we played in his absence.

During the following years we learnt that he'd begun making periodic trips to Europe in his quest for vocal recordings from the past. That he was prepared to personally venture to the other side of the world to improve his collection indicated a zeal which few of us could match. To give another perspective on this dedication, it's believed he turned down promotion in the firm he worked for in order to remain at a lower level of travelling salesman so he could look for records in second-hand shops around the country!

Although I'm unsure of the exact dates, I know I visited him in Auckland in 1969 at his home in Devonport. Underlining this memory I have a very clear recollection of listening for the first time to 78s by Erschov, Labinsky and Sibirjokov, never imagining for one minute that I would live to see original 'Angel' pressing in New Zealand. These were items which Dennis had located during correspondence with collectors behind the iron curtain. As collectors know, you have to work very hard to build up a collection in New Zealand. Apart from one shop in Christchurch, there were no retail outlets for vintage 78s. Larger cities like New York and London had dealers, but we were reduced to advertising in the Buy & Sell columns of local newspapers which yielded occasional strikes. Now we have Trade-Me. But when Dennis began to beat the bushes for recordings there was very little literature to help you in your searches. Therefore the knowledge which he acquired about these fabled singers in Russia is absolutely amazing. It didn't take long for his skills in this rarified climate to become known overseas. As a consequence of this, he was approached by editors and biographers to assist them in compiling discographies. One was James Dennis, founder/editor of *The Record Collector*. Today we can look upon these articles and see how they have stood the test of time, one of the best in my opinion being the work he did on the recordings by the Austrian tenor Julius Patzak which was published in February 1970. Other assistance he gave was to authors who featured the English tenor Alfred Piccaver, the German baritone Heinrich Rehkemper and the Latvian tenor Hermann Jadlowker. His contribution on Jadlowker's recordings is an amazing document which concludes with his pick of a dozen titles selected from 235 sides he made.

If there were any weaknesses in Dennis's collecting preferences it may be noted

that he preferred male singers and was rather critical of the way the English taught singing, preferences that were compensated by his great understanding and knowledge of Eastern European singers which he collected avidly from 78s, LPs and CDs. I remember him telling me how difficult it was to get records out of Russia during the Iron Curtain era. Trading LPs for 78s was the name of the game and depended on various postal rules and regulations that were for ever changing!

As the years rolled by he made annual trips to Europe calling in on the way across continents at ports of call in both North and South America to establish bonds with Laurence Holdridge and Milt Weiss and Discor. His frequency of operating out of Prague became evident about this time and in time we learned of his affection for Helena. They married and she came to live with him on what might be called a rotational basis for a few years before moving in permanently to Onehunga, dodging winters in Europe on a regular basis with one trip that turned into a two year sojourn.

In March 2007 he suffered a debilitating stroke. This curtailed his activities somewhat for the better part of a year but he gradually overcame some of the major disabilities he'd suffered to the point of being able to drive his car again. In 2005/6, sensing that he should begin to put his collection in order, he catalogued it in a publication that he sent to his friends and dealers inviting them to express an interest in buying records from his collection. I re-print a summary of his thoughts on record collecting on the front cover of this issue, which originally was intended as an introduction to his catalogue which was issued in April 2006. This premonition and desire 'to put things in order' may have been prompted by the death of his dearest friend Bert Cadman in 2003. With Bert no longer around, a huge responsibility fell on the shoulders of Rod Cornelius. It must have been a wonderful arrangement to have Rod so close at hand when it came to making decisions in the last couple of years.

Dennis is survived by two sons by his first marriage, Marcel and Stefan. Both are doctors with Marcel a radiologist in Christchurch and the Gold Coast, while Stephan is a surgeon in London. Dennis separated from his first wife who preceded him years ago. Helena, I have been told, has decided to return to Prague where her son from a former relationship lives. She is in the process of selling up everything and Rod has promised to keep us informed. From conversations I have had with him, it seems that both Laurence Holdridge and Milt Weiss have been informed about Dennis's death, and they would no doubt be well informed regarding his collection's dispersal.

In the meantime, we will wait in the wings with Rod acting as our conduit and remember Dennis for what he was - a wonderful person to have in ones company with a turntable, a bundle of records and a glass of wine.

Some notes on certain singers by Dennis Brew at a presentation in Wellington in 2003? During the afternoon, he played items by nineteen different singers, the highlight of the programme being a special section on Spanish singers. Here are his introductory notes for five of the items he played that afternoon.

DINH GILLY - Algerian born of French parents, a pupil of the great Cotogni, Gilly possessed an attractive full bodied baritone voice. He made his debut aged 22 in Paris and subsequently appeared in most of the major operatic houses around the world. His stormy relationship with Emmy Destinn resulted in two duet song recordings in the Czech language and there is a very fine Pagliacci Prologue sung in English! There are other records on HMV, Victor, Odeon and Beka. But the rarest disc is the one you will now hear which was recorded in England in 1928, but for some reason was only issued in Czechoslovakia. It was also published as a special edition in the USA. In this original form it is one of the rarest of electrical HMVs. It's a lovely piece of singing and I find it hard to understand why the English branch of HMV decided against pressing the disc for the local market.

TITO SCHIPA - When Schipa visited Russia in 1957, an observation was made that an unnamed Russian tenor possessed all voice and no art - while Schipa possessed all art and no voice. It's true that vocally Schipa's is not a great tenor voice, but as an artist and musician he has few rivals. Schipa bestowed his art on everything he sang, whether it be classical song, aria, or film music. I want to play you a song from the film "Vivere", a song you will know better as *Torna piccina*. But this version is sung in German, his only record in that language and probably the rarest of all Schipa's discs. It's not one of his great records but a curiosity of one of the greatest artists to make records.

HIPOLITO LAZARO - The next tenor is Hipolito Lazaro whose many Columbia recordings do turn up in New Zealand. He also made a few HMV titles which can appear here on purple label or on Victor. Lazaro possessed spectacular top notes, and this example features a top D in full voice. It's a record all tenor freaks want to own. He was one of the few tenors capable of singing the tenor role in *I Puritani*, and although the voice lacks sweetness it must have created an electric effect

in the opera house. This extract is really the introduction to the love duet, a pity he did not record that lovely music complete.

ALFRED PICCAVER - Imagine an Irishman not knowing the name of John McCormack - but how many Englishmen would know the name of Alfred Piccaver, without question the finest English born tenor. His career was allmost entirely spent in Vienna where he was idolised to a degree we can hardly imagine today. His every entrance was applauded and his big arias rewarded with long ovations. He is not universally admired among collectors - some find the tone nasal and the interpretation lazy. Others worship him- myself included. One critic described the voice like wrapping oneself in velvet - this description is more evident when listening to the electrical recordings. I want to play one of his rarest discs and the only recorded version of this aria from Donizetti's *Belisario*.

TUDOR MAZAROV - When Alfred Piccaver left the Vienna Opera in 1937, the Bulgarian tenor Tudor Mazarov was invited to replace him. Mazarov enjoyed a sensational debut and his fame spread rapidly throughout Europe. The war probably affected his subsequent career, although he continued to sing in Vienna until 1953. It's odd that no recordings were made by western firms. A Preiser LP was pressed from Bulgarian recordings, but nobody realised that some were issued as 78's until I reported finding three in Prague. There are also some live excerpts with Mazarov on the Vienna Opera archive issue on CD and LP. This is a superb heroic tenor voice, and the *Di quella pira* as exciting as any recorded version .

Studying his notes and list of items he played in Wellington I'm drawn to comment that you can virtually chart the growth and development of Dennis's collection beginning with the Italian and German schools of singing, through to Eastern European singers followed finally by the Spanish artists. Pacing his acquisitions on the various record collecting trips he made abroad, it was kick started by a very substantial collection of 3,000 records which he shared with Bert Cadman on the death of an Austrian collector Dr Heppner - one of the fortunate who managed to escape the Anschluss in 1938 to live in Auckland.

An interesting by-product to his trips overseas was how Dennis wrote these up with a letter which he duplicated and sent to his friends. These invariably outlined his successes in the collecting field, including his personal comments and notes which contain a frank appraisal of the records he'd found and enjoyed.

HELP!

Will someone from the ranks of the Scratchy Record Group please step forward and represent us during Heritage Week?

I have been approached by a representative of the Wellington Sea and City Museum to see if our group would participate in a Spring Festival Sunday afternoon performance at the Nairn Street Cottage - the idea being we'd have on hand some old gramophones and records to play. Originally, someone from their ranks suggested Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" on a wind-up. Fortunately, I was able to head them off at the pass on that idea! Unfortunately, I'm committed to attending a Photo Collectors Convention in Christchurch the weekend they've nominated. So if anyone from our group would like to step forward and represent us during heritage week - who knows what might happen. It might lead to someone in the audience, inviting us to clean out granddads old shed of records!

The date set down for this is the 25th of September from 2 to 4pm. The contact person to ring if you are interested is Jaqui Knowles tele 496 1944. p.s. I'm willing to lend my Gem phonograph and my Avona portable gramophone for the occasion with a selection of suitable records!

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