

music is divided so emphatically into two parts that the unity of the whole is lost. Madame Makushina is good in the first part (though not so good as in the other song), but I don't feel the stormy section suits her. For further details of the music I refer readers to the bulletin.

Fusati.—All the Velvet Face records I have heard this month have good surfaces, but here there is such peculiar excellence that I must draw special attention to it. The recording, too, is most satisfactory, the orchestra coming out with unusual clearness. Fusati's singing pleases me much more than it did in his last issues; the *Rigoletto* song, indeed, seems to be exactly right, and if in the Puccini he seems to show an affection for his high notes that may grate a little on some English ears, it is only fair to remember that it is not a crime for an Italian singer to sing Italian music in the Italian manner, especially when, as here, the high notes in question are really beautiful.

P. P.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

(December Issues.)

For details see opposite page.

The illustrious quartet of singers who head this list all seem to me to fail in one important respect: they sing at full blast throughout their songs, paying very slight attention to light and shade. There may be, probably are, people who like this continuous full organ effect, but the majority, surely, prefer a greater range of tone-colour. These singers would never use their voices on the stage for long in this manner; why do they consider it to be necessary on a gramophone record? With this qualification one can unfeignedly admire the tremendous volume of Chaliapine's voice; he gives the right sardonic quality to Mephistopheles' *Serenade*—inferior to Berlioz's setting but one of the best things in *Faust*—and his laughter is excellently demoniacal. The song in praise of Mammon is hurled at us with terrific power; the chorus participate in the affray. Anseau is the worst offender in the matter of tone-quality; indeed, he scarcely ever sings below double fortissimo! Yet his voice is of beautiful quality. The arias from *Lohengrin* are rather dull apart from their context.

Caruso's record is a great improvement on the last; the Spanish song is really fascinating though possibly not quite so humorous as it sounds! His diction and sense of rhythm are a joy; the Neapolitan song is quite pretty in a Pucciniesque way.

I think Battistini's *Eri tu che macchiavi* is an old record; certainly it is one of his best and the best of this particular aria. The second is from an unfamiliar opera of Verdi's in which the "force of destiny" is so strong that not a single character remains alive in the last act to carry on the plot. The chorus alone survive; but how lost is an operatic chorus without its principals! The music is dramatic in Verdi's middle-period style.

Mme. Suggia has chosen exceptionally futile music which, with the exception of rather faulty intonation at the beginning of the *Humoresque*, she plays beautifully, but not so beautifully as to disguise the poverty-stricken state of these works. It is true that good cello solos are hard to come by, but some do exist, and I implore Mme. Suggia to give us something worth while in her own inimitable way.

Renée Chemet's record is perfectly charming; the playing is by turns fine, virile, and graceful; the recording, too, is excellent. One may have to complain of the music on H.M.V. records sometimes, but rarely of the recording.

Tudor Davies uses his voice with real intelligence in these two Weber arias. It remains for an English singer to show the European artists how to make a good, interesting, record. Those who know only the *Overture to Freischütz* will recognise a passage from this towards the close of *Through the Forest*. It, and the other side also, is what was called a "scena" in opposition to the more formal type of aria prevailing in the older operas. The composer was free to introduce quick or slow, lyrical or dramatic sections by way of contrast, and was under no obligation to return to his first tune. The orchestral parts are excellent.

Florence Austral fails to secure the mystical atmosphere that should inform the cantabile section of *Servia's Ballad*; the chorus part, too, is missing—a serious default. Her singing, however, is dramatic and beautiful; this side makes interesting contrast with the Parlophone issue. I fancy most people will prefer the latter.

The air from *Cavalleria* is chiefly remarkable for the singer's lovely low notes, which appear to have gained much in quality. Altogether a good record. Congratulations to Leila Megane on achieving a real mezza-voce in *'Twas in the merry month of May*; it would please even Mr. Plunkett Greene! She has a beautiful voice. Frank Bridge's *Isobel*, a good song, is more suited to a baritone voice. The piano accompaniment is much too faint in both songs.

To play Borwick's arrangement of Debussy's *L'après midi d'un faune* is a *tour de force* but nothing more; child's play, no doubt, to Mark Hambourg. He takes all kinds of liberties with the rhythm—listen to the *accelerando* in the opening phrase—and what emerges in this interpretation is far removed from Debussy's bath of sensuous, languid sound. Moreover, the music depends almost entirely on its orchestration. The recording is quite good. Offenbach's gay strains are always welcome and are well played by De Groot and his band. I think it is time Mr. Ketelbey stopped ringing those "monastery" bells; even across a meadow they are painfully commonplace. Howard Carr knows how to score light music with consummate effect; this is a pleasant little piece of his.

It is a thousand pities Peter Dawson wastes his fine voice on such poor material as this; the "curtain falls" indeed, but rises to disclose always the same scene. The two humorous records will be preferable to uncle's stories at the Christmas dinner. It was all I could do not to dance a fling to the bagpipes; these, too, will enliven the family circle.

N., P.

PARLOPHONE

- E.10198 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Edith Lorand Orchestra: *The Sanctuary of the Heart and In a Chinese Temple Garden* (A. W. Ketelby).
 E.10202 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Edith Lorand Trio: *Londonderry Air and Menuett in G major* (violin solo) (Beethoven).
 E.10197 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Marek Weber and his Famous Orchestra: *O Katharina and The Football Walk*, fox-trots.
 E.10201 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Marek Weber and his Famous Orchestra: *Hawaiian Memories and L'Etrange*, waltzes.
 E.10205 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Emmy Heckmann-Bettendorf (soprano): *Caro mio ben* (Giordani) and *Ave Maria* (Schubert). With harp and Mustel organ acc.
 E.10206 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Antonio Cortis (tenor): *Forse la soglia and Ma se m'e forza perderti*, Finale from Act III, *Ballo in Maschera* (Verdi).
 E.10203 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—John Perry (tenor): *The Holy City and The Star of Bethlehem* (Adams).
 E.10204 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Robert Howe (baritone): *Nazareth* (Gounod) and *Jessie Broughton* (contralto): *Abide with me* (Liddle).

Edith Lorand.—The first of these pieces is what Kai-Lung would call "gravity-removing"; Mr. Ketelby's idea of China is as remarkable as his monastic impressions. But both pieces are excellent restaurant music, better played than they deserve, served up with *sauce piquante* in the form of a humming chorus, gongs, cymbals, and a fruity contralto voice. The favourite *Minuet in G* and *Londonderry Air* make a record that is bound to be very popular.

There is something extraordinarily pleasing about Marek Weber's orchestra; a lilt, a vital sense of rhythm, an abandonment to the music. *Hawaiian Memories* is a delicious record.

All the old "religious" war-horses are trotted out for Christmas. Their interpreters know just what is required of them and fulfil their functions admirably. It seems sad that people prefer this sickly stuff to the many fine old English carols they should be singing themselves.

I am sorry Mme. Bettendorf permitted a harp and Mustel organ accompaniment to these two songs. The harp is tolerable and not unsuited to the Schubert song; but an American organ is always terrible, doubly so on a gramophone. This apart, Mme. Bettendorf's singing is beautiful and full of intelligence. A fine recitative and aria from Verdi's *Masked Ball*. How sure the composer's touch is! He passes easily from declamation to lyricism, making his points with conviction but without undue stress. Mr. Cortis gives a rather strident but impassioned rendering of the anguished Earl of Warwick.

P.