

to his otherwise robust singing, if it cannot lessen the richness and power of his wonderful high notes. I do not "enthuse" over the latter as I once did, but the B flat in Piccaver's *Flower Song* and the semi-falsetto high C in his *Salut, demeure*, are really beautiful tones. Besides, the perfect ease with which he produces them is an added joy.

Gotthelf Pistor.—This German tenor has a good honest voice, well fitted for hard work, but not very refined in quality. In these two records he sings Siegfried's *Schmiedelieder* with lots of power and rhythmic energy and the right emphasis. He does it all, however, very mechanically, very deliberately, and without the inspirational impulse that I associated with the youthful Siegfried. The *Nothung* is too slow; the other gets a better accent and is fast enough to be lively.

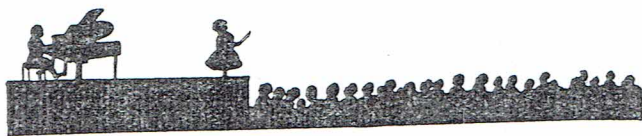
Ludwig Hofmann.—Here are the first records I have heard of Krenek's celebrated "jazz" opera, *Jonny Spielt Auf* (*Johnny strikes up*). Lovers of jazz will revel in them. They are stuffed with cleverness—the cleverness that belongs to music of their type—and its admirers can rejoice not only in the human saxophone (a capital baritone, Ludwig Hofmann) who obliges from time to time, but in the most exquisitely spasmodic syncopated orchestration that was ever devised. How faultlessly the latter is executed by the band of the Berlin State Opera House I need scarcely say.

Beniamino Gigli and Giuseppe de Luca.—Operatic duets that are neither hackneyed nor dull are particularly welcome when sung, as in this case, by first-rate artists. I do not recollect ever hearing finer voices or better style in the scene from the first act of *La Gioconda*, where the spy Barnaba warns Enzo that he is recognized and his purpose in Venice known. The music is magnificent, notably the last big phrase for the tenor, so gloriously sung by Gigli. I wonder how it is that Ponchielli's masterpiece remains only a gramophone and not a stage favourite in England! The two voices also blend well in the melodious duet for Nadir and Zurga from *I Pescatori di Perle*, which is a good deal cut towards the end, yet without lopping off the best. This is another instance of fine singing finely recorded.

Lucia and Rigoletto Ensembles.—I name the pieces instead of the artists because the latter are so numerous, and also because they are given in the list above. Your breath will not be taken away by the price of this record *de luxe*, seeing who the singers are. They were probably expensive; or, what is the same thing, their royalties are fixed at a high figure. The point is that their united efforts, vividly and faithfully realized by the electrical process, have achieved a superb rendering of these familiar ensembles. Merely to express an opinion, I will say that I consider the balance between the voices better preserved in the sextet than in the quartet, and that while Galli-Curci is supreme in the one Gigli dominates the situation in the other. Was not this, after all, inevitable?

G. Arangi-Lombardi, Merli and Pasera.—I have already had occasion to praise the new Italian soprano in the May number (new Columbia List) and have nothing to add here, because she is only associated with Francesco Merli in the *Miserere*. Both voices are pleasing to listen to. The chorus comes out better in the *Trovatore* than in the *Aida* Temple scene, where the body of sound is imposing but the parts are not always accurately sung. Again I say of Pasera—a splendid basso, if only his excessive breath-pressure did not cause a *vibrato*.

Sir George Henschel.—It is very wonderful—perhaps altogether without precedent—that a singer, who was giving recitals in London more than half a century ago, should still be capable of sitting down to the piano and accompanying himself in a couple of Schubert *Lieder*, as Sir George Henschel can. No one, of course, has ever accomplished such a feat for the gramophone before. The result is still more amazing, because the characteristic quality of the voice remains recognizable, unmistakable in all essentials, while the diction and the self-accompaniment are as perfect as ever. The record of *Der Leiermann* is simply lovable. HERMAN KLEIN.



SONGS

COLUMBIA.

Hebrew-Jewish Records. Herman Fenigstein (baritone) with orchestra, in popular songs (traditional). **Rumainisher Chasiner: Kinder Juhren** and **Motke Mach Nochamol** (9377). **Barmitzvah: Lo Lonu** and **A Yid, A Yid** (9378). **Unzer Torah** and **Dem Ziedens Yerusha** (9379). **Cantor Mordechay Hershman** (tenor) with orchestra, in two Jewish folk-songs. **Dos Pastuchel** (The Shepherd) and **Der Yid in Beis-Hamedrosch** (The Hebrew in the Synagogue) (9380). Four 12in., 4s. 6d. each.

Mark Raphael (tenor), with piano. Modern Jewish songs by Alman: **Erets Aboth** (Land of my Sires) and **Shir Haroeth** (Shepherds' Song) (4773); **Al Eileh** (For all these) and **Lo Amuth** (I shall not die) (4774). Two 10in., 3s. each.

Norman Allin (bass): **Brittany** (E. V. Lucas and Ernest Farrar) and **Were you there?** (Negro Spiritual, arr. Burleigh). D.1614 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

Robert Easton (bass) with orchestra: **The Midnight Review** (Glinka, English translation by Rosa Newmarch) and **The Song of Hybrius the Cretan** (Campbell and Elliott). 9412 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Malcolm McEachern (bass): **You along o' me** (P. J. O'Reilly and Wilfred Sanderson) and **Sittin' thinkin'** (The Old Shepherd's Song, Tempest and Fisher). 4855 (10in., 3s.).

Hubert Eisdell (tenor): **Ah, Moon of my Delight** (from Liza Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden*, from Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat) and, with Chorus and Orchestra, **In a Monastery garden** (Ketelbey). 9381 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Dame Clara Butt (contralto): **Home, sweet Home** (Payne and Bishop) and **O, that we two were maying** (Kingsley and Nevin). X339 (10in., 6s.).

One of the half-dozen most valuable records I have ever had has come this month. Anyone who has bothered to read me many times may think I've said that before; if so, it is the fault of the gramophone companies, who are at last bringing to vocal music some of the initiative they have long applied to instrumental. This time I raise my paean for one record, in particular, of this special Jewish Issue (a coincidence, this Issue, after last month's Parlophone! But that record is different from all these, and is still worth having). The outstanding record of these six is *Cantor Herschman's*. Again I have to confess only the most general knowledge of oriental music. But when one is trained and continually occupied in spotting imitations, both Eastern and Western, and when I say that I have heard countless imitations and not one genuine article, there seems some chance of my being right in thinking this is the real thing. In support of my view, I find hardly a trace of Western influence, and *Dos Pastuchel*, especially, is full (and here is its great value) of extreme elaborations and subtle vocal inflexions which cannot be reduced to our rigid, mere twelve semitones, Western system—and which are very beautiful and quite obviously not haphazard, but well-ordered. Only an expert could criticise; to me it is thrilling. As for the voice and singing—well, if all the principal tenors at present at Covent Garden were as good, there would be joy among the critics. It is superb; the only detail I can mention is that the Cantor has a perfect two-octave range. I should like to be told where one can hear such singing?

Fenigstein's records are only second to the Cantor's (or perhaps also to the ten-inchers). Does "Rumainisher" mean "Rumanian"? At any rate, there is strong Slav and gipsy influence in most or all on 9377-9. The first impression

for most people will be a thought of Brahms's Hungarian and Dvorak's Slav Dances. Quite the best is 9377; the least good is 9378. One would like to know who has so well arranged all these folk songs, especially the Cantor's.

The modern songs by Alman, who is new to me, are very good indeed. They seem an exact parallel to the work of de Falla (who stresses the oriental in Spanish music). In addition, it is very interesting to be faintly reminded, in these and in some of the folk-songs, of Russian music; and in Alman's accompaniments there are also touches of Cyril Scott! *Raphael*, too, is very good indeed. Perhaps 4773 is the best.

Ernest Bristow Farrar was one of several more than promising young British composers who were killed in the War. I was rather surprised to find that Columbia already have two recordings (Elwes and Eisdell) of his *Brittany* in their latest catalogue. True, it is the most exquisite thing he wrote—as far as we yet know, for other pieces of his are still being brought to light. Still, he has other things well worth attention, of both singers and players. Comparison of this record with the former two (and we can never, of course, have Elwes's re-recorded) cannot be made in such an initial review as this. It is, at any rate, one of *Allin's* most sensitive recordings, and emphatically you will want one or other record of a song which you will never forget. Its ideal interpreter is a soprano or tenor—it should have no heaviness. And yet I won't swear never to buy this record. As for the other side, perhaps neither *Allin* nor any other European bass can compare with a negro in Negro Spirituals. Yet, again, this is extremely good.

Easton might be a little more dramatically suggestive in *The Midnight Review*, and yet not sensational. His enunciation is not quite perfect. Otherwise, this is an excellent English version of a song which, however, I find a little too monotonous (even assuming it is intended to give a slight impression of monotony—its title, in fact, might be taken as the critic's motto). Is the bombastic yet harmless *Song of Hybias* taking a new lease? This seems the best of all its records, but I will not guarantee that; recordings of such songs are apt to sound all exactly alike.

McEachern's songs are exactly as boring, and exactly as blamelessly sung, as we generally find. His low-note turn doesn't quite equal last time's.

The best news of *Eisdell* is that he has turned from light blue to dark blue (fortunately not signifying that he has deserted his old 'varsity, but only that his records are cheaper). His *Lehmann* song is not, I'm afraid, worth the two shillings saving on *Tudor Davies's* (which, moreover, had orchestra). The *Ketelbey* is a fine piece of recording.

A record of *Home, sweet Home* by *Dame Clara Butt* will attract all who know and admire her recent records.

H.M.V.

Tudor Davies (tenor) accompanied by Percy Kahn: *Phyllis has such charming graces* (arr. Lane Wilson), and *Do not go, my Love* (Hagemann). E.504 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

John McCormack (tenor) accompanied by Edwin Schneider: *I hear you calling me* (Marshall) and *Mother Machree* (Ball). D.A.958 (10in., 6s.).

Peter Dawson (bass-baritone) accompanied by Gerald Moore: *At Santa Barbara* (Russell) and *The Admiral's Yarn* (Rubens). B.2661 (10in., 3s.).

Derek Oldham (tenor): *Absent* (Metcalf) and *I hear a thrush at eve* (Cadman). B.2660 (10in., 3s.).

Tudor Davies is in good voice and well recorded. Perhaps there is less actual tightness and forcing than in the old days. But he seems to be tending back to his old faults—curious pronunciation, and an intensity which continually, quite unwarrantably, approaches a perfect frenzy. This comes strangely to such a song as *Phyllis has such charming graces*, impassioned though it should be. However, he is rather better in the *Hagemann*, a song which is well worth knowing, if you don't happen yet to have come across it. In it *Davies* has some of that satisfying quality which is best described as thoughtfulness.

If *Davies* could acquire all *McCormack's* ease, he might become a really great singer. I suppose there are still people who will be thrilled by the mere news that *McCormack* has recorded these two songs. Certainly few tenors could make them more thrilling. His words are particularly clear, though his brogue is conspicuous. But this is perhaps apt in the imitation-Irish *Mother Machree*.

If *The Admiral's Yarn* comes up to your standard of broad humour you will fully approve *Peter Dawson's* recording of it. *At Santa Barbara* would be called saucy; as usual, *Dawson* leaves nothing to be wished.

Derek Oldham uses two all-too-familiar songs for a fine outpouring of tone.

PARLOPHONE.

Kate Winter (soprano): *Oh tell me, Nightingale* (*Liza Lehmann*) and *The Pipes of Pan are calling* (*Wimperis and Monckton*). R.119 (10in., 3s.).

Kate Winter is almost all that is really wanted in these two songs. Her voice and singing are very pretty, and a modest *cadenza* at the end of *The Pipes of Pan* is neatly executed. Her diction is not perfect.

ELECTRON.

John Lovering, with organ: *Lead, kindly Light* (*Newman and D. Pugh Evans*) and *Beyond the Dawn* (*W. Sanderson*). X.525 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

This setting of *Lead, kindly Light* is somewhat after the style of *Gounod's* "sacred songs," though more robust and dramatic. *Lovering*, and his organ accompanist, make the most of it, and of the familiar *Sanderson* song.

ZONOPHONE.

Charles Hill (tenor): *Afton Water* (*Hume*) and *Annie Laurie* (*Scott*). A.339 (12in., 4s.).

Esther Coleman (contralto), with orchestra: *My ain folk* (*Lemon*) and *The Dear Homeland* (*Slaughter*). 5107 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

This is the beautiful setting of the words of the familiar Scottish folk-song, *Afton Water*, which *Hislop* so finely recorded for H.M.V. recently. For anyone who doesn't wish to spend the necessary sum on *Hislop's* record, this by *Charles Hill* will serve excellently. To take rank among the best tenors he needs more training yet, but he has the voice to go a good way, and in *Annie Laurie* confirms the impression that he is already well worth listening to.

One of the few really good contraltos, *Miss Esther Coleman*, is again recording music absurdly unworthy of her. But as few readers can need introducing to *My ain folk* and the other song, they only need telling she puts good work into them. But surely a Scot would not approve her singing "poor" as "pure"?

C. M. CRABTREE.

NEW RECORDS

The name of Alfred Imhof Ltd. is a SAFE guarantee that any record supplied by them is absolutely new and unplayed.

Throughout the world gramophonists ask no SAFER guarantee than that which is implied by the reputation of

Alfred Imhof Ltd.

110, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1

SEE PAGE X.

BRUNSWICK.

The Bruno Kittel Choir and The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Kittel: *Kyrie* from Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Op. 123. 80030-1 (two 12in., 6s. 6d. each).

On the fourth side, The Hallelujah Chorus, from Handel's *The Messiah*.

This recording is of the first importance. Is there any hope of our having the whole of Beethoven's great *D major Mass*? Unfortunately, I can't recommend the *Kyrie* to anyone who cannot hear it before buying, as my pressings show inferior recording. 80030 is still harder to judge by being badly warped. Apart from this, the chief fault is that the bass is very weak (could a better pressing disprove even this?). The interpretation is straightforward, perhaps a little too straightforward, though by no means devoid of expression. All forces are good, and generally well balanced. Are the soloists merely members of the choir? If so, judged by such a standard, they are very good indeed, and should be given the honour (and perhaps help) of having their names published. But when such a work, or part of a work, is recorded, it would be worth while engaging absolutely front-rank singers. The *Hallelujah Chorus* is not the best performance recorded. By-the-bye, the labels say "in German" on both records. This should, of course, only be said of the Handel.

PARLOPHONE.

The Bruckner Choir, with orchestra: *Te Deum* and *Tu Rex Glorise* from Bruckner's *Te Deum*. E.10710 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

This is an extraordinary record. Anton Bruckner (1824-96) has a big reputation in parts of the Continent, but most of us in England know next to nothing of him, beyond the fact that he wrote nine symphonies. Perhaps most of us have an idea he is just a product of overripe German romanticism. But, to begin with, he is an Austrian, and Dr. Alfred Einstein says in the new *Grove* that he "can only be fully understood through his own country, Upper Austria, and through his attributes as a devout Catholic. His patriotism led him to mirth and to love of the world; his Catholicism to a deep mysticism." He says (rightly, judging by the *Te Deum*) that his religious music (which includes several big Masses) derives from that of Haydn and Schubert, but is "free, daring, individual and modern." Whether, as Wellesz says, he is "a worthy inheritor of Schubert" cannot be hastily judged. But, for a start, it is almost a duty to hear this record from his *Te Deum* (from the inconclusive ending I take it it will be completed), which whatever else is, as Dr. Einstein says, "mighty." The whole performance and recording, too, are mighty, especially of the soloists.

ELECTRON.

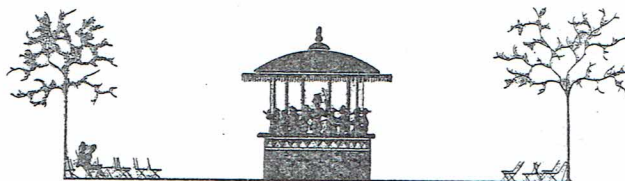
God bless the Prince of Wales and God save the King, by Miss Stiles Allen, Choir, Grand Organ and the Royal Artillery String Band (conductor, Captain E. C. Stretton, M.V.O.): *Land of Hope and Glory* (Elgar), recorded by Miss Edith Furnedged and others as above. O.216 (10in., 3s.).

This is perhaps the best recording of these familiar anthems—though I am allowing for the fact that I think my pressing is faulty, so you must test the record before buying.

C. M. CRABTREE.

ZONOPHONE RECORDS

See inside back cover.

**BAND RECORDS**

For some mysterious reason the present seems to be a close season for band records and I have played the few isolated specimens that have come my way during the last two months with a feeling of guilt akin to that experienced when dining off game that one knows must have been shot (or even snared!) at least one day before the season opens.

A really interesting event, however, that occurred recently was the arrival of a new sound-box from Mr. Virtz specially made for heavy orchestral and band recordings. This is wonderfully effective for its purpose and more than compensates for the shortage of records. Even this sound-box, however, is quite unable to make any of the few records I have received at all exciting.

The only real thrill in the lot is the outburst of cheering at the end of a record of *The Song of the Donjereos* (Radio No. 841) sung by 2,000 children to the accompaniment of the **Scots Guards Band**. This record was made in Whitefield's Tabernacle on the occasion of the *Daily Sketch* Birthday Club Rally on April 11th last. Two other Radio records I have received contain an abbreviated version of *William Tell Overture* (No. 813) and *In a Monastery Garden* and *In a Persian Market* (No. 812) all played by the **Scots Guards Band**. These records are wonderful value for 1s. 3d., and the quality of tone does not deteriorate towards the centre of the record as much as I had expected.

I don't think I have received a Parlophone band record for at least two years, and what is even more unfortunate is that the one I have received at long last is a waste of really excellent recording. The playing of the **Irish Guards Band** (No. E.5988) is only mediocre, and the two marches *Clonkerty Clonk* and *The Old Grey Mare* are commonplace in the extreme. The title of the former is an almost perfect example of onomatopoeia.

Another dull record is Regal No. G.9081 which contains the *Japs' Tattoo* and the *Funeral March of a Bumble Bee* played by the **Royal Air Force Band**. The latter is a pretentious inanity calculated to make both Rimsky-Korsakov and Gounod turn in their graves. A better record by the same band is that of the *March Past* and *Grand March of the R.A.F.* (Regal No. G.9080) in which both playing and recording are excellent.

I look forward to better things next month with the confidence of one who has experienced the worst possible.

POSTSCRIPT.

A belated arrival has restored my faith and equanimity before I had dared to hope. **Walter B. Rogers and his Band** have been progressing very steadily for some time and their new record of Sousa's *Stars and Stripes* and Bidgood's *National Emblem Marches* (Brunswick 3738) is every bit as good as the same band's recent record of *El Capitan March*, which is a classic in its way. The band is small, but the playing is full of life and the recording is superb. The bass section, which seems to include a bass saxophone, is exceptionally good. I have read with interest the comments on the playing of this band which have appeared from time to time in our American cousin *The Phonograph*. The early records aroused no enthusiasm at all, but their latest records have elicited a warning that Sousa and Arthur Pryor must look to their laurels, with which verdict I agree entirely.

W. A. C.