

thought her when I heard her performance in the flesh. Her mezzo-soprano quality is most attractive and in the sad little fireside song she is delightful. Then, all the more florid passages have been studied with a really musicianly ear. The only thing they never sound is spontaneous or genuinely gay and mischievous. You have only got to compare her singing with that of Supervia in the first act duet, where Cinderella pleads with her father to be allowed to go to the ball, to see how much more may be made of the part—take, for instance, that little sad aside “Addio, speranza!”. Miss de Gabaan gets it in, in time; but how little charm, resignation or pathos she gives it. The same is true of the famous Rondo at the end, where nothing like the right amount of sparkle is achieved, not to mention the all important bravura. Supervia and to a greater extent also Simionato (in the LP Cetra version not yet released here) not merely show off, they sound as jolly as champagne glugging out of a bottle. This Cinderella still seems to have her mind on the scullery. Still, it's a jolly good try.

Sesto Bruscantini is the member of the wedding party who has the style most surely and innately under control and does well as the sort of sub Figaro figure. It is astonishing how the two British basses, and especially Ian Wallace, manage to assimilate the foreign idiom, singing with gusto.

In short, a good recording of a jolly and enjoyable performance which is most welcome.

P.H.-W.

★**STRAUSS, JOHANN. Wiener Blut.**

Prince Ypsheim-Gindelbach,

Prime Minister of Reiss-Schleiz-Greiz **Fritz Hoppe** (bass)

Baldu'n, Count Zedlau, Ambassador of Reuss-Schleiz-Greiz

**Sebastian Hauser** (ten.)

Gabriele, his wife

**Traute Richter** (sop.)

Demoiselle Franziska Cagliari

**Irma Beilke** (sop.)

Kagler, her father, proprietor of a carrousel **Leopold Clam** (bar.)

Pepi Pleininginger, mannequin

**Rita Streich** (sop.)

Josef, Count Zedlau's valet

**Klaus-G. Neumann** (ten.)

**Chorus and Orchestra of the Berlin Civic Opera** (Hans Lenzer). Stage

Director: Dr. Adolf Rott. Nixa

ULPg209-1/2 (two 12 in., 72s. 11d.).

Operetta by Johann Strauss, arranged

for the stage by Adolf Müller. Text

by Victor Léon and Leo Stein.

You might easily suppose that this was “another *Fledermaus*” and welcome it with open arms. In fact, it is a moderately well recorded and lively performance, with all the proper Berlin archness and dignity from the ladies and the rather chesty wobbling from the tenor that you might expect; the whole conducted with spirit if hardly the dash which the lamented Clemens Kraus put into that Decca issue. But the trouble is something else and lies in the circumstances in which the work came to be composed. Strauss was at work on it when he died: he was, in any case, fitting out the story, at the time of

the Congress of Vienna, with a lot of old material which it had been suggested to him was already overlaid in his huge output and could well be used anew. But, in fact, the work had to be put together by the devoted Adolf Müller after the composer's death, and no one quite knew what was intended. To that, possibly, is due our feeling that though the operetta is undoubtedly Straussian, it lacks the signature of the artist in some way hard to define. And almost every one of the many splendid tunes in it one already knows in some other connection. It is pleasant to hear these melodies distributed among talented singers, but the total effect is one of potpourri, all the same. Besides which, there are insertions and rearrangements in this version, quite apart from the original confecting of the work. (Dozens of other so-called Strauss operetta were similarly confected; for instance, *The Thousand and One Nights* and *Casanova*: I don't want to suggest this one is a freak).

There is scarcely any bridging spoken dialogue. The numbers and inserts follow on pleasantly without one's wanting badly to know the details of the story. The ball scene is much expanded and among inserts are the Kaiser Waltz as a prelude to Act III (rather heavily accented I found) the Leichtes Blut polka, the Künstlerleben Waltz, and so on, not to mention Czernik's Italian song “Chi sia”, prettily sung by Rita Streich, and other things set to Strauss tunes, one of them (No. 10) delightfully sung by Irma Beilke as Franz. The ladies are well in character and act with charm, or what passes for such in Berlin operetta circles; the men make appropriately chucklesome and sentimental noises, though do not expect anything on the level of Erich Kunz's Danilo in Columbia's *Merry Widow*. There are many minutes of enjoyment here. I do not wish to crab it, only to suggest you hear it first.

P.H.-W.

P.H.-W.

## NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE

By W. A. CHISLETT

The only doubt I find with Decca LK4080 is its title—*The Immortal Works of Kettelbey*. Good salon music, yes; vintage salon music if you will; but immortal!! What is the reaction of the present generation to Mr. Kettelbey's bon-bons I wonder? There must now be a generation who have never experienced a new recording of any of his music, for it is nearly forty years since “In a Monastery Garden” was published and I do not remember a new recording of it or of any of his other works for fifteen years or more. It will be interesting to see how this “omnibus” sells. It includes “In a Monastery Garden”, “In the Mystic Land of Egypt”, “Bells Across the Meadow”, “With Honour Crowned” (composed in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession to the throne of King George V), “In a Persian Market”, “The Sanctuary of the Heart”, “The Ploughman homeward plods his weary way”, “In a Chinese Temple Garden” and “Bank-holiday” (‘Appy ‘Ampstead’). My own favourite is the last-

★**WEBER. Wie nahte mir der Schlummer—Leise, leise. Und ob die Wolke sie verhüllte**, from “Der Freischütz”. **Traute Richter** (soprano), **Orchestra of the Städtische Oper, Berlin** (Artur Rother). Telefunken TM68017 (10 in., 18s. 0½d.)

For the recording angel, as for the recording Agatha, there are two versions of these arias, long since deleted alas, but which set a standard. “Und ob die Wolke” was made by Lemnitz for Decca Polydor before the war: perfect phrasing, steady legato, creamy tone. No other version I know of, nor any later remake, matched that. For the allegro of the scene at the bedroom window there is nothing quite to match Lotte Lehmann's energy, ecstasy and heartbeats, though it was a Parlophone record difficult to play.

In the complete Decca set Maud Cunitz is too unsteady to give perfect pleasure. The present singer has a lovely voice, warm and suggestive of just the right sentimental emotion; and *innigkeit*; but the hold on the vocal line sounds diffident, slightly precarious; she has not got it on a firm basis, the danger of toppling off the note or pressing sharp lurks uncomfortably. The test place comes just before the opening of “Leise, leise”, where, surveying the moonlit sky, Agatha sings serenely down the arpeggio, an exposing trial of “even scale”, that virtue growing ever rarer.

It is a rich and spacious recording however, and in the circumstances there is no necessity for hurrying. That is not perhaps such an advantage: the thought of the second hand speeding round might have prompted that little extra “go” so lacking in the excited tune of joyful anticipation when Agatha feels “all her pulses throbbing”. In short, a pleasant account of two lovely arias, but no master version.

P.H.-W.

named, a clever piece of writing. It opens with a lively country dance, but this soon gives place to a one-step in which mouth-organs are suggested. Scraps of such popular favourites as “The Gipsy's Warning” and “Tell me the old old story” are heard on the cornet and the whole brass give us “Arf a pint of mild and bitter”. The one-step proceeds and the *pièce de resistance* arrives when “There is a Tavern in the Town” and a snippet from “Semiramide” are heard together, only to be ousted by the old waltz “Over the Waves” in which a wheezy and blaring steam-organ is simulated. **Stanford Robinson** and the **New Symphony Orchestra** are in good form and seemingly thoroughly enjoy themselves. The same forces also offer a medium-play (Decca LW5115) of *A passing storm on a summer's day* and *The phantom melody*, together with the two titles marked with an asterisk above.

*Victory at Sea*, by Richard Rodgers, will be new to non-television viewers. Those who saw the T.V. films will, however, know the music