

ELISABETH SCHUMANN ON THE ART OF SONG INTERPRETATION: MOZART: Das Veilchen; SCHUBERT: Lachen und weinen; BRAHMS: Vergebliches Standchen; STRAUSS: Morgen; SCHUBERT: Die Forelle; WOLF: Mausfallen-Sprüchlein; In dem Schetten meiner Locken (with Ernest Lush, piano) (1950). Preceded by MOZART: Il Re pastore--L'amerò serò costante; Alleluia (with BBC Symphony; Sir Henry Wood, conductor, 8 September 1936). IGI 274 (Educational Media Association, P. O. Box 921, Berkeley, California 94701)

These lectures have been around before as EJS 328. Schumann opens with some general remarks on singing and teaching in rather quaint but perfectly clear and understandable English. She sings each song through, then offers a few points on interpretation. She places strong emphasis on the importance of the words. There are points about the art of coloring the voice, about breath control and vowel sounds. In Morgen, she says, the singer must be "singing" mentally from the beginning of the prelude, so that when she comes in she is already with it. One remembers her as one of the few singers who really did this. Also in this song, she speaks of the importance of counting the rests in the final lines. Her voice in 1950 was by no means what it had been, but some of the old sparkle was still there, even when the going was not easy. She concludes her talk with encouragement to the young singer - don't worry - have confidence.

The lecture is preceded by the Re pastore aria and the Alleluia in a public performance, complete with tumultuous applause. L'amerò is less fresh vocally than in her earlier commercial recording; the old radiance is there in the upper voice, but the bottom is rather weak. The aria is similarly cut, as though to fit within the 12-inch 78 time limit, and it concludes with the long familiar cadenza. Curiously, the Italian is still imperfect - she still sings fidi (for fido) amante. Alleluia is taken ever more swiftly than in the familiar recording, but the coloratura is more even, if still not perfect.

GREAT BRITISH MEZZO-SOPRANOS AND CONTRALTOS: HANDEL: Serse--Ombra mai fu; Messiah--He shall feed his flock. Dame Clara Butt. VERDI: Don Carlos--O don fatale; SAINT-SAËNS: Samson et Dalila--Printemps qui commence. Louise Kirkby Lunn. PURCELL: Dido and Aeneas--When I am laid in earth. Edna Thornton. ELGAR: Sea pictures--Sabbath morning at sea. Leila Megane. BIZET: Carmen--Gypsy dance (Eng.). Olga Haley. SCHUBERT: Erkönig (Eng.). Muriel Brunskill. PURCELL: Dido and Aeneas--Wayward sisters. Edith Coates. HAYDN: Hark what I tell to thee (The spirit's song). Gladys Ripley. A. BEECHAM: Willow song; O mistress mine. Nancy Evans. SCHUMANN: Requiem, Op. 90, no. 7. Flora Nielsen. GLUCK: Orfeo ed Euridice--What is life?; BRAHMS: Constancy; Feinsliebchen (Eng.); ELGAR: Dream of Gerontius--My work is done... It is because. Kathleen Ferrier. EMI HLM 7145

Time was when the contralto voice was a British specialty; today real contraltos are few and far between. It is both amusing and

instructive to listen back over the years to this parade of strongly contrasted voices. Beginning with the one once known as "the Glory of the Empire," we hear Dame Clara Butt in what seem to me far below the best samples of her extensive recorded repertoire. The voice was one of the great natural phenomena of music, and I speak with the experience of having heard her in Carnegie Hall. She could inundate her audience with the most magnificent tone, and where her songs were elemental in expression one had to be moved. Neither subtlety nor humor was in her makeup, which accounts for the various "cute" songs she recorded. And, though England in her day was the land of oratorio, I am afraid her Handel style would not pass muster today. Of a very different cast was Louise Kirkby Lunn. A more disciplined singer with a voice of sensuous appeal, she was perhaps a little placid temperamentally, yet her records almost always make good listening. Hers is a very respectable O don fatale (one wonders what happened in the studio to account for her burst of laughter at the end) and her Printemps has a sinuous line. For Edna Thornton's voice I suppose the word is "plummy," which makes for rather heavy going in Dido's lament. But Leila Megane does honor to Elgar's orchestral song under the composer's baton. One can well imagine he was pleased. Olga Haley, a mezzo, brings life to Carmen's Gypsy song in English, but Muriel Brunskill, a contralto, left us better records than the English Erlkönig. At least part of the trouble is with the unnamed pianist. Hers was surely a splendid voice. Though Edith Coates, in her younger days, distinguished herself in the standard contralto roles - Amneris, Azueena, Dalila, Carmen, etc. - she is best remembered as a singer of character parts. And so it is appropriate that she be represented by a side from Constant Lambert's recording of Dido and Aeneas, in which she played the Sorceress. Gladys Ripley sang Haydn's beautiful Spirit's song as filler for her set of the Elgar Sea pieces. It is good to have it again, for though others have done the Elgar as well or better than she, the Haydn haunts the memory. A point of interest in the two Shakespeare songs pleasantly sung by Nancy Evans with Sir Thomas Beecham at the piano is that they are compositions by Sir Thomas' son. Flora Nielsen, a pupil of Gerhardt, was a Canadian by birth, but she spent most of her life in England. Though she sang in opera, her reputation was built mostly as a lieder singer. Schumann's Requiem is an excellent sample. Finally Kathleen Ferrier. The four selections here may well be enough to sell the disc to some who have no special interest in the other ten singers, for they are all unpublished tests, indeed the first she made. All four are sung in English. The Orfeo she was to do again in this translation, aside from her "complete" recording in Italian. Brahms' Liebestreu and the delightful folksong give a measure of the singer, but the selection from Gerontius is valuable as the only memento of her admired singing in that work. No apologies are needed for these early efforts. The transfers have all been skilfully accomplished, and full documentation is given as to recording dates and numbers as well as accompanists and conductors.

STRAUSS: Salome--Jochanaan descends into the cistern; Final scene. Liuba Welitsch, soprano; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; Herbert von Karajan, conductor. Ariadne auf Naxos--Es gibt ein Reich. Maria Cebotari,

soprano; Vienna Philharmonic; von Karajan. Rosenkavalier--Herr Gott im Himmel. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Irmgard Seefried, soprano; Vienna Philharmonic; von Karajan. Rosenkavalier--Finale Act 2 (Letter scene and waltz). Ludwig Weber, basso; Dagmar Herman, contralto; Vienna Philharmonic; chorus; Otto Ackermann, conductor. EMI World Records SH 286

This program takes us back to the late forties and reminds us there were great Strauss performances in those days. Those of us who were present at the Metropolitan on the night of 4 February 1949 witnessing the joint debut of Liuba Welitsch and Fritz Reiner have long treasured the recording of the final scene of Salome brought out by Columbia shortly thereafter. Since then another recording, made in Vienna in 1944 with Maticic conducting, has been released on Seraphim 60202. And now here is yet another, also from Vienna, dated 22 and 24 November 1948. It was never issued because it is incomplete. Somehow one 78rpm side was damaged in transit from Vienna to London, leaving a gap of some seven pages in the vocal score. This is especially sad, as on the whole it seems to me the best of the three performances. Certainly the orchestra, under the young von Karajan, beats up a special fury, almost but not quite submerging the voice in the climaxes. It was not an easy voice to submerge. Remembering that Strauss once urged Elisabeth Schumann to undertake the role of Salome (a proposition that the singer, of course, was too wise to consider) it seems to me the Welitsch voice, combining steely brightness with a girlish quality, is very close to the ideal. Another feature of this recording is the presence of Herod and Herodias, both completely in character. Karajan masterfully moulds the score, in full sympathy with the singer. This scene is preceded by the orchestral music that accompanies Jochanaan's descent into the cistern. Completing the first side is the monolog from Ariadne sung by the legendary Cebotari, who died in the year of this recording at age 38.

The Rosenkavalier excerpts were issued in this country as Columbia ML 2126 (10-inch). I am amused now to read my review in The American Record Guide for August 1950, in which I praised the presentation scene highly but was disturbed by the orchestral playing in the finale. The name of the conductor on side one was not given; I suggested that might better have happened on the second. In those days the names of Schwarzkopf and Seefried were only becoming familiar in this country - neither of them had as yet appeared here. My one caveat was that their voices were so similar that the needed contrast was lost. No one today could possibly confuse them, but I think the point was valid. We are indeed used to a mezzo Oktavian. If the black voice of Ludwig Weber is not so completely in character as Baron Ochs as was that of Richard Mayr, he still gives a good performance despite the orchestra.

SCHUBERT: Die Schöne Müllerin D.795. Gerhard Hüsch, baritone; Hanns Udo Müller, piano. EMI SH 295

The historical importance of this release hardly needs emphasizing. Though not the first complete recording - Hans Duhan recorded all three

cycles for the Schubert centennial - the impact of the Hüsck performance in 1935 did much for the general appreciation of lieder. Today it has a new importance, for styles in lieder singing have changed, and we do well to go back and hear how it was done a half century ago.

Fischer-Dieskau, who reaches by far the largest audience of any lieder singer in history, holds his listeners by probing and underlining the texts. Hüsck was content to let the poems sing themselves in Schubert's music, bringing to bear only his clear diction, his uniquely beautiful voice and his ability to color his tone. The very first song tells us a lot. Das Wandern, strophic and folklike, with its jaunty, impatient piano part, is wonderfully steady and hearty. Only for the fourth stanza, at the mention of the heavy stones, is there a little holding back. So on, through the easy flow of Wohin?, the enthusiasm of Halt!, the slackening pace of Danksagung an dem Bach, the settling into the group at the mill (and the warm tone of the master's voice in Am Feierabend), through to the final tender lullaby of the brook, Hüsck brings the story to life. My one reservation is that, being a baritone, he sings the songs in transposition. A tenor singing in the original keys has an advantage in impersonating the young miller. But few tenors (Aksel Schiøtz was an obvious exception) have comparable insight, the ability to get into the spirit of the little tragedy. Hanns Udo Müller, Hüsck's regular pianist, was the perfect partner. I am somewhat disappointed in the transfers, for the voice is brought a little too far forward and some adjustment is necessary.

#### HISTORICAL REISSUES

This list of mostly operatic recitals spans a period of performances from the turn of the century to the thirties, covering a variety of singing styles. The singers are arranged chronologically according to their birth. The recitals are well documented with recording dates (at least the years) and with one exception (Kipnis) original company numbers. Most have matrix numbers as well. The mystery man of the collection - Bellantoni - is listed first because I have been unable to find his dates.

BELLANTONI, GIUSEPPE, baritone

MARCHETTI: Ruy Blas--Ai miei rivali cedere; WAGNER: Walküre--Addio di Wotan; PACINI: Saffo--Un' Erinni; VERDI: Forza del Destino--Urna fatale; WAGNER: Siegfried--Invocazione a Erda; BUZZI-PECCIA: Lolita; VALENTE: Luna cortese; GRAFFEO: Chianitudedda mia; DENZA: Occhi di fata; TOSTI: L'ultima canzone. OASI 633

All I have been able to learn about Bellantoni is that the last four songs on this program are listed in Bauer as recorded in 1909. The entire program is from Fonotopia originals. His was a more or less typical Italian baritone voice, well schooled. His repertoire did not stop with the standard fare. The Ruy Blas aria is of course identified with Battistini, but the piece from Pacini's Saffo is a real novelty today. His ventures into Wagner seem to me no more successful than is usual with the

Italians, and of course the Fonotipia orchestra was no help. I need hardly say he sang everything in Italian. In general he strikes me as very typical. The natural beauty of his voice was his best asset.

CHALIAPIN, FEODOR, basso (1873-1938)

ROSSINI: Barbiere di Siviglia--La calunnia; GLINKA: Life for the Czar--They guess the truth; Ruslan and Ludmilla--Field, o field; MUSORGSKI: Boris Godounow--In the town of Kazan; Pimen's narration; Farewell of Boris; BOITO: Mefistofele--Ave Signor; MUSORGSKI: Song of the flea; KOENEMANN: When the king went forth to war; FOLKSONG: Arise, red sun; The birches; The sun rises and sets; Lushinuschka (Little sunbeam). Court Opera Classics CO 378

Chaliapin's recording career began in 1898 if we count several private cylinders (some reproduced on OASI 630) - his first "engagement" was in 1901 - and lasted until 1936. Over those years he covered a considerable repertoire, but he recorded some of his favorite selections many times over. He is one singer whose every performance was individual - sometimes very different from his treatment of the same music on another occasion. For that reason every individual take is a new experience. These recordings were all made between 1908 and 1910; only two of the selections - the Ruslan aria and Pimen's narrative - were never recorded again. A singing actor who acted with his voice as well as his body, he took so naturally to recording that the listener can relive the experience of his performances over and over. The voice here is at its finest, and it should suffice to say that his performances are generally less mannered than in later years. The dubbings are very good if one does not object to some surface noise carried over.

RUSS, GIANNINA, soprano (1873-1951)

BELLINI: Norma--Casta diva; ...Ah! bello, a me ritorna; ...Sola furtiva, al tempio (with Virginia Guerrini); ...Deh! con te li prendi; ...Mira, o Norma (with Guerrini); MEYERBEER: Africaine--Figlio del sol; WAGNER: Tristan und Isolde--Mild und leise (Ital); VERDI: Forza del destino--La vergine degli angeli; Aida--Ritorna vincitor!; ...O cieli azzurri; PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut--In quelle trine morbide; Bohème--So, mi chiameno Mimi. Court Opera Classics CO 381

Russ was four years older than Boninsegna; their careers had much in common and the quality of their voices was similar. Russ came to the Manhattan Opera in 1906 and made her debut as Donna Anna on 12 December. She remained for two seasons. Boninsegna sang Aida at the Metropolitan on the 21st of the same month, but as everyone knows her career in the house was brief. According to P. G. Hurst, Russ's "voice was of a more even quality than Boninsegna's and its tone perhaps more beautiful." To my own ears the "glow" that was the distinctive characteristic of Boninsegna's tone is missing in Russ. One suspects that Russ made the better impression in the theater. Her "knowledge of the conventions of the stage was complete," wrote Krehbiel, "and expressive powers excellent, though they exerted little charm." Of her Donna Anna we read in John F. Cone's book on the Manhattan Opera, she "possessed the requisite style;

but her voice was too explosive and unsteady," and of her Aida, "always the sincere artist whose voice, alas, was no altogether pleasing." She was less successful at Covent Garden. So we conclude that, like Boninsegna, she did not export well, and her career was mostly in Italy. The records here presented fall mostly into two groups, the early Fonotipias (she had previously recorded for G & T) of 1905-6, and the later group made in 1914. In between are one from 1908 (Bohème) and one from 1909 (O cieli azzuri). The early performances are piano accompanied, the later ones with orchestra. Norma was said to be Russ's greatest role. One can believe this hearing the great scene from act 1 and the two duets with Adalgisa. The cavatina, Casta diva, is from the 1906 group, the cabaletta, Ah! bello, a me ritorne from 1914. The first is marred by some heavy surface noise, but it makes it clear that the lady had style and a good even line. Her descending chromatics in the cadenza are effective, if not so spine-tingling as Lilli Lehmann's or Callas'. The duets are said to be the only recordings left by the mezzo Virginia Guerrini, who proves an excellent match for Russ. Aside from some difficulties in shifting registers, her scale is even and her tone quality rich. The teamwork is fine. The 1905 Africaine, sung in Italian, is really a fragment, for it simply stops in the middle, but it is well sung as far as it goes. Italian, again, is the language of the 1914 Liebestod. Recorded on two sides, it benefits by a more proper tempo than the familiar versions from that period; no attempt has been made to join the two segments together in this dubbing. The voice is firm and true, but no text comes through; I wonder if a truly shapely performance is possible in Italian. La vergine degli angeli was considered an outstanding recording in its day, and Fonotipia was especially proud of it. Not without reason, for the voice is beautifully floated over the chorus and piano. Here again comparisons with Boninsegna's more impassioned performance are inevitable. The two famous scenes from Aida show the voice to best advantage and they have a dramatic ring. The top C in O cieli azzuri is a shade or two below pitch, but otherwise all is well. In quelle trina is up to her best except for an obtrusive piano accompaniment. Mi chiamano Mimi is equally well sung and benefits by better sound. In general the dubbings suggest difficulties, perhaps due to the condition of the originals. There is some lack of clarity and more than the usual carryover of surface noise.

HUTT, ROBERT, tenor (1878-1942)

MOZART: Zauberflöte--Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön; FLOTOW: Martha--Ach, so fromm; WAGNER: Lohengrin--Atmest du nicht; ...Mein lieber Schwann; Meistersinger--Fanget an!; ...Morgenlich leuchtend; STRAUSS: Breit über mein Haupt; Morgen?; VERDI: Trovatore--Dass nur für dich mein Herz erbebt; SMETANA: Verkaufte Braut--Weiss ich doch eine (with Michael Bohnen); ...Es muss gelingen; LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci--Scherzet immer; ...Jetzt spielen... Hüll dich in Tand nur; PUCCINI: Tosca--Und es blitzten die Sterne; MASCAGNI: Cavalleria rusticana--Mutter, der rote Wein; VERDI: Aida--Entfliehen aus diesem Lande wir (actual performance, September 1927; Leo Blech, conductor).  
Preiser LV 249

Hutt was a Wagnerian tenor with an unusually round and warm voice. His recordings, made over two decades or so, are uneven. The first number here, our one example of Mozart, is disappointing, at the outset because of a portamento, and throughout because of a certain stiffness in delivery. Also the tempo is slow. The next selections, from Martha and Lohengrin, are progressively better - less stiff - and with the two from Meistersinger he really hits his stride. Best of all are the two Strauss songs with the composer at the piano, a recorded classic. The second side is given over to translated opera. Somehow with the Trovatore the voice takes on a different color though the language is still German. But the stiffness is with us again. In the duet from The bartered bride he is well in character, and Bohnen enjoys his famous role, but the solo from that opera misses the easy fire of Tauber's version. Only in the last two selections do I find Hutt particularly impressive. The Cavalleria sounds like an electrical recording (though a very early and weak one) and it has life. The Aida, a fragment from a live performance (with an abrupt ending) is a fine showing both for Hutt and for the impressive soprano, Violetta de Strozzi.

ALDA, FRANCIS, soprano (1883-1952)

VERDI: Trovatore--Miserere (with Enrico Caruso); Otello--Piangea cantando; ...Ave Maria; Falstaff--Sul fil d'un soffio etesio; CATALANI: Loreley--Ah! dunque ei m'amerà; PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut--In quelle trine morbide; ...L'ora, o Tirsi; OFFENBACH: Contes d'Hoffmann--Elle à fui; PUCCINI: Bohème--Si, mi chiamano Mimi; ...O soave fanciulla (with Giovanni Martinelli); Madama Butterfly--Ancora un passo orrvia; ...Oh! quanti occhi fisi (with Martinelli); ...Un bel dì vedremo; Gianni Schicchi--O mio babbino caro; BOITO: Mefistofele--L'altra notte in fondo al mare; STRAUSS: Morgen! Court Opera Classics CO 383

This is an unusually successful transfer of some of the best recordings of a very fine but underrated artist. Her records were all made for Victor, beginning in 1910. The Miserere with Caruso presents her, as do some of the other recordings on this program, in a role she never sang, at least at the Met. Both she and the tenor are in fine voice, but unfortunately the scene is rushed and somewhat trimmed. She was Desdemona to Slezak's Otello in 1909, and her two records were made shortly after the premiere. They are among the very best ever made of these numbers. She was also the Nanetta of Toscanini's Falstaff with Scotti the previous season, and her recording of the lovely aria is a fitting memento. Next in order is a spectacular bit from Loreley, an opera that did not come to the Met until 1922, though her recording was made a decade earlier. She was not in the first cast but took over the lead from Muzio in the following season. Her performance is a masterpiece, with one of the most beautiful trills on record. Manon Lescaut was perhaps her favorite role, and her singing of the two short numbers is a model. In the Contes d'Hoffmann and the narrative from Bohème she is fine, and perhaps it is unfair to remember Bori. She is not perfectly partnered by Martinelli in either of their duets - surprisingly he does not go up with her at the end of the Bohème. In Butterfly's entrance she takes the alternative ending, descending from the top note. O mio

babbino caro is splendid, and L'altra notte surely ranks with the best ever made of this aria. Perhaps surprisingly, her Morgen is very lovely, and it has some atmosphere. If her German is a bit vague, so was her English, and to some extent the other languages. Comparing the Alda program on CL 99-45, I find the following duplications: Loreley, Falstaff, Mefistofele, Manon Lescaut and Gianni Schicchi. The Miserere with Caruso is another take, done without chorus.

PERTILE, AURELIANO, tenor (1885-1952)

PUCCHINI: Manon Lescaut--Donna non vidi mai; ...Ah! non v'accinate!;  
MASCAGNI: Cavalleria rusticana--Siciliana; BOITO: Mefistofele--Giunto sul passo estremo; WAGNER: Lohengrin--Deh! non t'incantan; GIORDANO: Fedora--Vedi, io piango; Andrea Chenier--Improvviso; PUCCHINI: Tosca--Recondita armonia; MEYERBEER: Africaine--O paradiso; WAGNER: Lohengrin--Il racconto; LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci--Vesti la giubba; GASTALDON: Musica proibita; ROTOLI: Mi sposa sara mia bandiera; CAPUA: Maria, Mari; O sole mio; TOSTI: L'ultima canzone; CILEA: Adriana Lecouvreur--L'anima ho stanca; ...La dolcissima effigie; LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci--Serenata; VERDI: Rigoletto--Quartet (with Wanda Bardone, Irene Minghini-Cattaneo, Giulio Fregosi); Trovatore--Miserere (with Minghini-Cattaneo); PUCCHINI: Tosca--E lucevan le stelle; VERDI: Rigoletto--Parmi veder le lagrime. Pertile, Vol. 8. OASI 634

Pertile has passed into legend as Toscanini's favorite tenor in his La Scala days. He is also remembered by some old-timers as the tenor who had the misfortune to make his Metropolitan debut on the occasion of Jeritza's first Tosca. He remained to sing six other roles that season (1921-22) but did not return the following year. Yet because of his numerous recordings he is by no means unknown in this country. Here are four sides, 24 selections, covering many of the favorite Italian arias with a couple of Italianized Wagner numbers thrown in, a quartet, a duet and four songs. But there is little light and shade in his highly charged singing. Perhaps this may be blamed on the recording, which seemed to have been geared to show off his power and robustness. A little variety is introduced by the Rigoletto quartet, in which the women are overbalanced by the men, and the Miserere, sung surprisingly with the mezzo Minghini-Cattaneo. There is no attempt at stage effect. Manrico, Leonora and the chorus are all lined up in the studio. As usual with such dubbings, some recordings are quieter than others. The noise level reaches its height in O paradiso.

KIPNIS, ALEXANDER, basso (1891-1978)

MOZART: Entführung aus dem Serail--Wer ein Liebchen hat gefunden; Nozze di Figaro--Susse Rache (with Else Ruziczka); Zauberflöte--O Isis und Osiris; ...In diesen heil'gen Hallen; ROSSINI: Barbiere di Siviglia--Die Verleumdung; VERDI: Simon Boccanegra--Il lacerato spirito; WAGNER: Meistersinger--Das schöne Fest; GOUNOD: Faust--Rondo vom goldenen Kalb; ...Ständchen des Mephistopheles; RUSSIAN FOLK SONGS: Soldier's song; Kalinka; VERDI: Don Carlos--Sie hat mich nie geliebt; WAGNER: Parsifal--Good Friday music (with Fritz Wolff); STRAUSS: Rosenkavalier--Herr Kavalier! (with Ruziczka). EMI SH 280



Any comments on Kipnis and his records seem superfluous, for surely every member of ARSC must know him well. His was perhaps the most magnificent bass voice in living memory (in my experience its only rival was that of Mardones) and he was a musician and artist of the top rank. He recorded so well that it seems there could hardly be any question of his stature. These recordings were made, with one exception, during his days at the Berlin opera, in 1930 and 1931. The exception is the famous excerpt from Parsifal recorded at Bayreuth during the 1927 festival. The four Mozart numbers on the first side show how Kipnis could portray character. He is a delightfully doleful Osmin in the Entführung song, a crafty Don Bartolo in the Figaro and the most impressively sonorous of Sarastros in the Zauberflöte. He can almost convince me that Figaro should be sung in German, so deftly does the patter fall from his lips. And I know of no other recordings to compare with the two from Zauberflöte. For such dignity one has to go back to the Plancon of 1905, who sang in Italian. La calunnia calls for more patter in German, and Kipnis brings it off. But surely the Simon Boccanegra aria that follows (in Italian) is among his finest; it is unrivaled by any other version I know. Hardly less impressive is the Meistersinger piece. As for Faust in German, here it is possible to take some exception. The annotator suggests that perhaps Kipnis was too nice a person ever to make a convincing devil. Still, there is lots of spirit here, and in the Serenade he savors the words effectively. The two contrasting folksongs may be compared with later recordings he made for Victor with balalaika orchestra. The Don Carlos is splendidly delivered, but it does suffer from the German translation (one rarely hears it in the original French!). The Parsifal is still impressive, and the long-familiar Rosenkavalier excerpt is a delight. The excellent assisting artist here and in the Figaro, Else Ruziczka, deserves a word.

PONSELLE, CARMELA, mezzo-soprano (1892-1977)

VAN ALSTYNE: Memories; CLARIBEL: Come back to Erin; MOLLOY: Love's old sweet song; DVORAK: Songs my mother taught me; MOYA: Song of songs; SCHERTZINGER: One night of love; MORE: Last rose of summer; LÖHR: Little grey home in the west; CAPUA: O sole mio; LEONCAVALLO: Mattinata; HERBERT: Kiss in the dark; When you're away; ROMBERG: Lover come back to me; BIZET: Carmen--Habenera; VERDI: Don Carlos--O don fatale. MDP 001

The legend of Carmela, who stepped aside to further the career of her younger and more gifted sister Rosa is well known. Perhaps it didn't happen quite that way, for Carmela was on the roster at the Met for nine seasons. She made her debut as Ammeris on 5 December 1925, and over the years she sang an occasional Ammeris or Santuzza, crowning her career when she sang Laura to Rosa's Gioconda. That she had a real voice is obvious from these records. And those of us who have been sent into gales by the duet version of Comin' thro' the Rye (with its Norma cadenza) will have to admit that such teamwork must have made the Ponselle sister act unique in vaudeville. It would seem Carmela lacked Rosa's capacity for growth. Surely the repertoire here presented calls for no comment. Taken from broadcasts in the thirties, it was aimed at a certain audience.

The two opera airs, dated 1951, are not notable for style.

NEMETH, MÁRIA, soprano (1897-1967)

MOZART: Entführung aus dem Serail--Ach, ich liebte; ...Martern aller Arten; VERDI: Trovatore--In deines Kerkers tiefe Nacht; Aida--Wehe, mein Vater (with Emil Schipper); WEBER: Oberon--Ozean, du Ungeheuer; VERDI: Forza del destino--Jungfrau, Mutter der armen Seelen; ...Pace, pace, mio Dio; GOLDMARK: Königin von Saba--Der Freund ist dein; ...Doch eh' ich in des Todes Tal. Preiser LV 248

Nemeth's brilliant career was centered in Vienna, where she made her debut at the Staatsoper in 1924 and sang until 1944. She made guest appearances notably in London and in Salzburg, but never came to America. Born in Hungary, she was well prepared by a number of teachers, including Georg Anthes, Fernando de Lucis, and Felice Kaschowska. Her repertoire included Turandot, Donna Anna, Konstanze in Die Entführung, the Siegfried Brünnhilde along with the standard Verdi and Puccini roles. She was especially successful in a revival of Goldmark's Queen of Sheba. The voice was unquestionably phenomenal, apparently equal to any demands, and its rather steely quality was unique. But there were limits to it, which may account for her singing Ach, ich liebte a half tone low. On the other hand the Oberon aria shows some weakness in the lower register. But she sings like a musician, and she is never dull. Her Martern aller Arten is exciting, though her coloratura is less perfect than, say, Lilli Lehmann's. She adds an extra high C at the end. As a Verdi singer she lacked the richness of a Ponselle or a Milanov tone, but she had temperament. D'amor sull' ali rosee (in its German guise) is a bit fast, as it so often was on 78's, but her trills are genuine. In the Aida duet she is convincing enough, but Schipper is too German a baritone for Amonasro. The two selections from Forza (in Italian) show Nemeth at her best, but the two from Die Königin von Saba are the crown of the recital. This was certainly her most famous record, and it stands today still without a rival. This is difficult high-flying music in which the voice floats serenely over the chorus. It is not for every soprano.

ANDAY, ROSETTE, contralto (1903-1977)

BACH: Matthäuspassion--Erbarme dich, mein Gott; HANDEL (sic): Dank sei dir, Herr; MOZART: Clemenza di Tito--Parto, parto; GLUCK: Orfeo ed Euridice--Ach, ich habe sie verloren; VERDI: Trovatore--Die Hände in schweren Ketten; BIZET: Carmen--Ja, dis Liebe hat bunte Flügel; ...Drausen am Wall von Sevilla; ...Wenn die Karten einmal; SAINT-SAËNS: Samson et Dalila--Die Sonne sie lachte; ...Amour! viens aider ma faiblesse; ...Sieh' mein Herz erschliesset sich; THOMAS: Mignon--Kennst du das Land?; KIENZL: Evangelimann-O schöne Jugendtage; KORNGOLD: Die tote Stadt--Glück, das mir verblieb. Preiser LV 256

That Anday was a favorite in Vienna is attested by her long tenure at the Staatsoper, where she first appeared as guest in Carmen in 1921, and remained until 1961. To my knowledge she sang only once in New York: I heard her in a Town Hall recital on 28 December 1931. I well remember being disappointed, as I knew her recording of Strauss' Befreit, which

in my opinion has never been surpassed. And so, I am afraid, it has been with others of her numerous records. Obviously not everyone shares my reaction, for this is Preiser's third Anday program. We begin with a truncated version of the great aria from the Saint Matthew Passion. The voice is ample and rich in quality but not too steady, and the style seems to merit the word flabby. Could this be conductor Karl Alwin's fault? Dank sei dir, Herr fares no better. She slides into her first note and fails to keep a steady pulse through the long phrases. Perhaps it is permissible to sing the postlude in this psuedo-Handel (actually the work of Siegfried Ochs). Nor is her Mozart style notably clean in the Tito aria. Inevitably it was somewhat cut for 78rpm. These were all made in 1929. Going back to 1924 for the Orfeo lament (in German) the voice is steadier. Perhaps it is the German translation that hinders her in Azucena's great narrative from Trovatore (1926); in any case it lacks excitement. Carmen was a favorite role with Anday, and there is more life in her singing of the principal numbers. Dalila's Spring song (1924) and Mon coeur (1926) are sung in German, which is a handicap, but Amour, viens aider (1929) is in French. The voice is uneven, but here she displays some real temperament, and she descends impressively to the low A at the end. The lack of firmness in both the Mignon and the Evan-gelimumann pieces seems now characteristic, though both are dated 1924. Of greater interest is her performance of Marietta's song from Die tote Stadt, sung to the composer's piano accompaniment. Nowhere on the program does she sound so opulent or so steady. The date is 1924.

#### OPERA REISSUES

CILÈA: Adriana Lecouvreur (abridged). Mafalda Favero (Adriana); Elena Nikolai (Princess); Nino Filacuridi (Maurizio); Luigi Borgonovo (Michonnet); La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Federico Del Cupola, conductor, (1949). PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut--Act 3. Mafalda Favero (Manon); Giovanni Malipiero (Des Grieux); Mariano Stabile (Lescaut); Giuseppe Nessi (Lamplighter); Carlo Forti (Sergeant); Arturo Toscanini, conductor (Historic reopening of La Scala Opera House, 11 May 1946). Turandot--Signor Ascolta. Mafalda Favero, soprano (London 1937). MDP 005, 2 discs

It seems safe to identify this Adriana as an abridgement of the performance once issued as Colossium 1018/20. Since interest is in the star rather than Cilea and his opera, it has been pruned to throw the spotlight on Favero. Even Nikolai, who as the Princess has the best aria in the opera, does not get to sing it for us. The tenor and baritone are unremarkable. Favero's tone is bright and steady, and she sings like a true prima donna, a believable Adriana. But the recording, obviously taken from a broadcast or at a live performance, was substandard in its day; considerable adjustment is necessary to make it listenable now.

The Manon Lescaut is of greater importance, though one might wish Act 2 had been preserved rather than Act 3. After Del Cupola's Adriana we are immediately struck by the importance of a dynamic conductor, and

Toscanini maintains the tension throughout. Malipiero, Stabile and the veteran comprimario Nessi make a fine supporting cast. Finally, as an encore, Favero sings Liu's touching appeal. Probably taken from DA 1498, this excerpt takes us back to the soprano's high prime and to a professional standard of recording.

HUMPERDINCK: Hänsel und Gretel. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (Gretel); Elisabeth Grümmer (Hansel); Josef Metternich (Peter); Maria von Ilosvay (Gertrud); Else Schürhoff (Witch); Anny Felbermayer (Sandman; Dew Fairy); Choirs of Loughton High School for Girls, Essex, and Bancroft's School; Philharmonia Orchestra; Herbert von Karajan, conductor. EMI SLS 5145, ASD 3618-19, 2 discs

First issued in 1954, this set was hailed as the near-definitive performance and an exceptional recording. Though surpassed in the latter respect, it remains a classic. My own reaction (in 1955) was typical. I found the reproduction extraordinary. My only reservation concerned the conductor, "the over-confident virtuoso who wants you to know he can play more slowly and more softly than anyone else. Perhaps it is all stretched a bit too far. The cast could not easily be bettered. Schwarzkopf adopts a girlish tone hardly recognizable as her own, and she is matched by the lovely unclouded voice of Grümmer. Schürhoff as the Witch scratches and screeches without, perhaps, raising any gooseflesh among her hearers (for one does not take this performance too seriously as drama), and Metternich is a bluff, hearty father. The orchestra has a bright, roomy sound." It is in the last respect that the verdict hardly stands today. Though the sound is by no means bad, it is no longer so impressive.

LEONCAVALLO: I Pagliacci. Galliano Masini (Canio); Tito Gobbi (Tonio and Silvio); Onelia Fineschi (Nedda); Filippo Morucci (Arlecchino); Teatro dell'Opera di Roma; Giuseppe Morelli, conductor (1949). MDP 006

This is Masini's show. The abridgement begins with the cutting of the orchestral prelude; other sections in which the tenor does not take part - the bell chorus, large pieces of the Nedda-Tonio and the Nedda-Silvio duets, the Intermezzo and the introduction to Act 2, etc. - are skipped. Masini's voice is indeed impressive, and like a good Italian he is at home in the part. But certainly of equal interest is the singing of the young Gobbi, both as Tonio and as Silvio. The contrast he makes between the gauche love-making of the clown and the smooth lyricism of the young villager is vocal acting of a high order. In her Ballatella Fineschi strikes me as a run-of-the-mill Italian soprano; in the comedy she shows up better and produces some good firm high tones. Morucci's voice is unusually full for a comprimario, and his serenade is quite impressively sung. But whatever pleasure one may get from the performance requires patience, for the sonics are a trial. This must have been taken from a broadcast, for Gobbi's shifting of roles would hardly be possible in the theater.

MASCAGNI: L'Amico Fritz. Beniamino Gigli (Fritz); Rina Gigli (Sussl);

Afro Poli (David); Miriam Pirazzini (Beppe); Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro San Carlo di Napoli; Gianandrea Gavazzeni, conductor (1951). MDP 002, 2 discs

This must be the performance once issued as EJS 355. We are reminded that it is "live" by the burst of applause (for Gigli, no doubt) as the curtain goes up on the first act. Chief interest, needless to say, is in the tenor's performance, and some of his fans may take a sentimental delight in his co-starring with his daughter. But the recording seems to have been done (probably surreptitiously) in the house, and its quality is such that a fair appraisal of the performance is not possible. Even the tenor's voice is often swamped by the hollow-sounding orchestra. All too frequently singers and orchestra are not quite together. The audience, nevertheless, shows its delight from time to time, and there is the usual quota of coughing. Additional information not on the labels: supporting roles are played by L. Della Pergola, Irene Acampora and I. Rizzo.

MASSENET: Werther. Georges Thill (Werther); Ninon Vallin (Charlotte); Germaine Feraldy (Sophie); Marcel Roque (Albert); Armand Nerçon (Le Bailli); Louis Guenet (Johann); Henri Niel (Schmidt); Choeur des Enfants de la Cantoria; Choeurs et Orchestre du Théâtre National de L'Opéra Comique; Élie Cohen, conductor (1935). EMI 2C 153-10746/8, 3 discs

With Werther only recently established in the American repertory, this 1935 recording reminds us it was never out of favor in France. Cast with three favorite singers in the leading roles, Massenet's masterpiece was given the best production available at the time. Surely the set is an important historical document. As a musical experience it has its drawbacks. The opening unison D wavers ominously, after which the orchestral introduction has that rather boxy sound characteristic of many French recordings in that period. When the voices enter they overbalance the orchestra, and there is no attempt at atmosphere. The first act opens, we remember, with the Bailiff teaching the children to sing a Noël although it is July, so that they will be ready when the season comes. The singers are genuinely French and they obviously know their business. At the very least this will be a good repertory performance. But then comes Werther in the person of Georges Thill, and we realize that it will be more than that. Here is the very model for any singer aspiring to the part. Firm, manly, even tone and superb diction bring the poet to life. Presently he is joined by Ninon Vallin, with one of the most sympathetic voices in memory. Charlotte is cast as a mezzo, but here is a case where the usual tendency is reversed - the role is often taken by a soprano - from Emma Eames and Geraldine Farrar to Régine Crespin. Vallin has a good strong lower voice, and the part offers no problems to her. The part of her sister Sophie is taken by Germaine Feraldy, whose light and patently French lyric voice contrasts well with Vallin's. And so, as the drama proceeds, we become accustomed to the sonics and enjoy the singing. There are a few minor cuts, and I thought the shortness of the pause between Acts 2 and 3 a bit jarring. Still I suppose the transfer from 78 is about as good as can be done.