

HISTORICAL REISSUES

Blessed are the dead who recorded well, for their works live after them. One imagines the spirit of Roberto Bauer smiling benignly as it hovers over the houses of Preiser, EMI and Bellaphon. What were formally just so many listings in his catalog have now become listening experiences. But, to remind us that the Golden Age (if that is what it was) is not so far back around the corner, the final dates of three of our twelve featured artists are yet to be filled in. Six are represented by electrical recordings. It seems logical to consider them here in chronological order according to their birthdates. The programs are well documented, with recording dates where possible, catalog and matrix numbers. The transfers are generally very good.

ARMIDA PARSI-PETTINELLA, mezzo-soprano (1868-1949)

DONIZETTI: Favorita--O mio Fernando; MEYERBEER: Prophète--Figlio mio; VERDI: Trovatore--Condotta ell'era in ceppi; ...Giorni poveri vivea (with Pasquale Amato, Ferruccio Corradetti); Forza del destino--Al suon del tamburo; ...Rataplan; Aida--Fu la sorte dell'armi (with Ester Mazzoleni); GOUNOD: Faust--Le parlate d'amor; BIZET: Carmen--All' udir del sistro il suon; ...Voglio danzar pel tuo piacer; THOMAS: Mignon--In veder l'amata stanza; MASSENET: Le Roi de Lahor--Viaggia o bella; PONCHIELLI: Gioconda--Voce di donna; BRAGA: La Serenata.
Court Opera Classics CO 372.

Parsi-Pettinella was one of the stars of the Fonotipia catalog in the first decade of the century. Hers was obviously an ample voice, and she recorded well. It was one of those Italian mezzos, rather bright in color, flexible and vibrant. There are flaws in some of her performances - an uncertain ending in O mio Fernando, a not too steady top in her very lifelike, very Italianate Ah, mon fils. But Azucena's narrative gets an exciting performance with an unnamed tenor responding, and the two pieces from Forza are bright and lively - a suggested model for the ladies who sing Preziosilla nowadays. The chorus in Al suon del tamburo, and later in Carmen's Gypsy song, is decidedly weak. The Gavotte from Mignon (in Italian, of course) is rather jumpy, but the little known aria from Le Roi de Lahor proves quite attractive. The picture on the jacket suggests an imposing woman. Obviously she had temperament. An interesting artist.

JOSEPHINA HUGUET, soprano (1871-1951)

ROSSINI: Barbiere di Siviglia--Una voce poco fa; DONIZETTI: Lucia--Regnava nel silenzio... Quando rapita in estasi; VERDI: Rigoletto--Oh mia Gilda... Lassù in cielo (with Renzo Minofli); Traviata--Ah! fors' è lui... Sempre libera (with Pietro Lara); ...Alfredo, Alfredo, di questo core (with Gino Giovanelli, Francesco Federici); BOITO: Mefistofele--Amore! misterio celeste, profondo! (with Gennaro de Tura); MEYERBEER: Les Huguenots--O lieto suol di Turenna; Dinorah--Ombra leggera; GOUNOD: Faust--Signor! concesso sia all'umil Vostra ancella (with Giuseppe Torres de Luna); THOMAS: Mignon--Non conosci il bel suol; ...Io son Titania; Hamlet--Ed ora a voi cantero una canzon;

ARDITI: Il bacio. Court Opera Classics CO 373.

Josephina (Josefina or Giuseppina) Huguet was a Spaniard whose career was based in Italy, though she traveled extensively in Europe and South America and even made one tournée in New York. But her fame rests on her long series of records, begun in 1903. Like Maria Michailowa's, her voice recorded exceptionally well in the very early days. It was a high, brilliant and flexible soprano, less rounded and warm than Michailowa's, white in quality as bespoke her Italian orientation. So successful were her records that they sold the world over, and she virtually covered the entire standard repertoire, even filling in gaps where Red Seal artists rarely ventured. Victor issued many of them in its black label. She might have been called the poor man's Tetrizzini. She was Leoncavallo's voice for Nedda in the famous 1907 complete Pagliacci. Her voice blended beautifully in duets with many of Italy's leading singers - de Lucia, Giogini, de Tura, Paoli, etc. This is a good selection, varied in style to show her versatility as well as her facility. There are a few bloopers - the Mignon Polonaise ends in something of a scramble, and there is an exaggerated sob at the end of Connais-tu le pays? Her intonation was less than perfect, and sometimes ending a cadenza she does not quite meet with the returning orchestra. But it is easy to understand her popularity. Few sopranos, down to the present day, have taken so naturally to recording.

RICCARDO STRACCIARI, baritone (1875-1955)

VERDI: Ernani--Lo vedromo, veglio audace; ...O de verd' anni miei; Traviata--Pura siccome un angelo... Dite alla giovine... Imponete (with Fernanda Chiesa); ...Di Provenza il mar; Vespri Siciliani--In braccia alle dovizie; Aida--Quest' assisa ch'io vesto vi dica; GOUNOD: Faust--Dio possente; ...Stammi a udir, Margherita; MEYERBEER: Africana--Figlia di regi; PONCHIELLI: Gioconda--Pescator, affonda l'esca; LEONCAVALLO: Zazà--Zazà, piccolo zingara; PUCCINI: Tosca--Tarda è la notte... Ha più forte sapore; ...Già, mi dicon venal; FRANCHETTI: Germania--Ferito prigionier. Court Opera Classics CO 375.

Stracciari is a collectors' favorite, well established in this country as Columbia's premiere baritone during his stay with the Chicago Opera, 1917-19. The recordings here are all from his earlier period with Fonotipia. His was a long career, from his debut in 1900 to a final farewell in 1944, though his official retirement was in 1936. For a baritone of his generation he had the unique distinction of perpetuating his two most famous roles - Rigoletto and Rossini's barber - in complete electrical recordings. Clemens Höslinger provides some interesting discussion in the jacket notes as to Stracciari's reputation as a bel canto baritone, quoting Henry Pleasants' verdict: "The most beautiful voice of all." But Höslinger does not leave it at that. For myself, I would find it difficult to agree with Pleasants. To my ears the voice and style are big and somewhat blustery, closer to Ruffo than to Battistini and De Luca. He could be very dramatic, as in the much admired Africana piece, but again rather tame as in the Gioconda that follows. For a good example of his well-schooled legato singing we

have the long duet from Traviata with, I'm afraid, a rather ordinary Italian soprano. The name of the bass in the first Ernani number is not disclosed. Somehow I find him most convincing in the earliest, piano-accompanied, recordings (1905) from Aida and Germania. Those who treasure the Columbia repertoire will find here interesting material for comparison. Stracciari fans will welcome so generous a program of rarities.

LOLA ARTÔT DE PADILLA, soprano (1880?-1933)

MOZART: Nozze di Figaro--So lang hab ich geschmachtet; THOMAS: Mignon--Ihr Schwalben in den Lüften (with Franz Egenieff); HUMPERDINCK: Königskinder--Ach, ich bin allein; ...Bin ein lustiger Jagersmann (with Karl Jörn); ...Sieh her, ob mir Hunger die Glieder entziert; MOZART: Nozze di Figaro--Ich weiss nicht wo ich bin, was ich tue; ...Sagt, holde Frauen; Don Giovanni--Schmäle, tobe, lieber Junge; ...Wenn du fein fromm bist; VERDI: Traviata--Un di felice, eterea; ...Parigi, o cara; BIZET: Carmen--Parlons de toi, la messagiere; PUCCINI: Bohème--O soave fanciulle (with Björn Talen). Court Opera Classics CO 370.

Daughter of two famous singers, the Paris-born Belgian soprano Désirée Artôt and the Spanish baritone Mariano Padilla y Ramos, Lola Artôt de Padilla had her career almost exclusively in Germany. And, as Leo Riemens speculates in the accompanying notes, one wonders why a star of the first rank in that country never appeared in London or America. She was chiefly noted as a Mozart singer, but along with an almost complete list of the standard lyric soprano roles she sang in the world premiere of Delius' A village Romeo and Juliet (1907), Arthur Nevin's Poia (1910) as well as the first Berlin performance of Königskinder (1911) and Ariadne auf Naxos (1916) in which latter she sang the Composer. This program comprises her complete discography. One wonders again with Riemens whether there may not have been some unpublished solos recorded when she was making duets with Egenieff in 1909 or with Talen in 1922. For the most part the original discs are extremely rare, one possible exception being the Königskinder duet with Karl Jörn, which was issued in this country on Victor's blue label. She must have been a lovely Goose Girl, for her voice has belllike purity and a very personal appeal. The selection beginning Sieh her... is in part the same as Farrar's Weiss noch das grosse Nest (one of her loveliest records). The various Mozart solos, though sung in German, well substantiate her claims in this field. Perhaps, because of the text, Non so più is a bit jumpy; Vedrai carino suffers from a terrible orchestra and under par recording. And the orchestra in the otherwise admirable Batti, batti has some confused moments. Voi che sapete is the best of the lot, and a very fine best it is. The duets with Egenieff, her first recordings, are hardly exceptional; the four with Talen, her last, are good enough to make one wish for a better partner. Talen is not the most gracious of tenors; his singing is rather stiff, and he tends to overbalance the soprano. But these four duets are sung in the original languages and they have lovely moments. The best of her partners is the dependable and warm voiced Jörn.

FRIEDRICH SCHORR, baritone (1888-1953)

MOZART: Zauberflöte--Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen (with Emmy Bettendorf); ...Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen; Don Giovanni--Feinsliebchen komm ans Fenster; BEETHOVEN: Fidelio--Ha! welch ein Augenblick; LORTZING: Zar und Zimmermann--Sonst spielt ich mit Zeppter; MEYERBEER: Huguenots--Vom Krieg, der uns bedroht; WAGNER: Tannhäuser--Wie Todesahnung; Der fliegende Holländer--Wie? Hort' ich recht? (with Otto Helgers); ...Wie aus der Ferne... Versank ich jetzt... Wirst du des Vaters Wahl (with Melanie Kurt) Preiser LV 241.

The position of Friedrich Schorr as the great Hans Sachs and Wotan of the thirties is well documented by electrical recordings made in his prime. This Vol. 3 on the Lebendige Vergangenheit label is made up of acoustics from his pre-Metropolitan career. In those days his repertoire was less specialized. It is hard to think of him as Papageno - his one Mozart role at the Met was the High Priest, which suited him better. The duet with Bettendorf is not without charm, although I could wish they had not broadened so much at the end. Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen, as expected, shows that Schorr was no Rehkemper. Nor can we picture him as Don Giovanni (he recorded the Serenade again for Brunswick - with a different German text). Don Pizzaro in Fidelio was one of his Met roles, and this recording shows that he could be nasty when occasion required. The Zar und Zimmermann is a natural, the German Huguenots more of a curio. Inevitably there is a later recording of the Abendstern, but this one is beautifully sung. Side two is given over to The Flying Dutchman. Schorr's characterization was the feature of the Met's 1930 revival (with Jeritza as Senta) but he left us electrical recordings of only the first act monologue and the opening solo from the duet with Senta. The first act duet with Daland is rare except in complete recordings; Schorr has a worthy partner in Helgers. More variable is the Senta duet, here given complete. Unfortunately Melanie Kurt is hardly a match for him. Perhaps 1922 was late in her career. But I have never felt that her recordings lived up to the reviews she earned in her Met days (1915-17). Here her voice is smooth enough but shows no sign of temperament. Nor is her intonation perfect. (Interestingly, she recorded a part of the duet with Fritz Feinhals some years before.) In sum, there are good reasons for acquiring this disc, though chiefly for advanced Schorr collectors.

FRIDA LEIDER, soprano (1888-1975)

GLUCK: Armide--Ah, si la liberté; MOZART: Don Giovanni--Don Ottavio, son morta!... Or sai chi l'onore; BEETHOVEN: Fidelio--Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin?; WAGNER: Tristan und Isolde--Doch nun von Tristan (with Elfrieda Marherr-Wagner); ...Mild und leise; Walküre --Nun zäume dein Ross... Ho-jo-to-ho! (with Friedrich Schorr); ...Rette mich, Kühne! (with Göta Ljunberg); ...War es so schmähhlich; ...Du zeugtest ein edles Geschlecht (with Schorr); Siegfried--Heil dir, Sonne!... Ewig war ich... Oh Siegfried, dein war ich von je! (with Rudolf Laubenthal); Götterdämmerung--Schweigt eures Jammers jauchzender Schwall... Starke Scheite schichtet mir dort (with Marherr-Wagner); Parsifal--Ich sah das Kind; Schmerzen; Träume; SCHUBERT: Erk König; Auf dem Wasser

zu singen; Frühlingstraum; SCHUMANN: Widmung; Der Nussbaum; Marienwürmchen; Meine Rose; WOLF: Wie glänzt der helle Mond; Mignon. EMI Electrola IC 147-30 785/86, 2 discs.

To some of us who remember Frida Leider at the Met, her singing had a vitality and her presence a magnetism that we missed in her great successor, Kirsten Flagstad. She was, in a word, an exciting singer. And though we knew her only as a Wagnerian she was far more versatile than Flagstad. In Chicago she sang Donna Anna and the Marschallin, an experience we in New York might envy. Her early reputation as a Verdi soprano is well documented on acoustic recordings (reissued on Preiser LV 155). In this recital I personally am especially grateful for the Gluck aria at the very beginning, a longstanding favorite. She sings in quite creditable French, and though her method is not French the style and expressiveness of her singing rise above such considerations. And the Don Giovanni in Italian is surely one of the great recordings. Jürgen Kesting, in the introductory notes, is rather apologetic about her portamenti and rhythmic liberties, but I do not find them excessive. Indeed, her soft reprise of the opening phrase, and the way she hammers away at the word vendetta, for me bring Donna Anna uniquely to life. And certainly hers must be the greatest recording of the Fidelio aria. The two scenes from Tristan are disappointing in different ways. The first act Narrative and Curse is rather weakly recorded, and as Marherr-Wagner's voice was light for Brangaene (I still think of Branzell, Olczewska or Thorborg) there is not enough contrast. As for the Liebestod, why in 1931 was it thought necessary to crowd it onto a single twelve-inch side? In the early days of Gadski, Nordica and Fremstad this was understandable, though never satisfactory. Various selections from the historic 1927 Walkure album, with Schorr and Ljunberg, show Leider at her heroic best, from the really joyous battle cry to the eloquent pleading with Wotan. In the Siegfried duet she is hampered by the stiff singing of Laubenthal, but her Immolation scene and the narrative from Parsifal are worthy of her. Of the two Wesendonck-Lieder I find Schmerzen good but Träume disappointing. Surely the unnamed conductor is to blame for the heavy-footed repeated chords and probably for the lack of breadth, uncharacteristic of Leider. It was Michael Raucheisen, we are told, who interested Leider (as he did various other opera singers in the war years) in lieder singing, and with him she made "numerous" recordings in 1941-42. Of those included here only two Schubert and three Schumann songs were published. Frühlingstraum and Der Nussbaum are welcome additions. Even more welcome, because more unusual, is Wie glänzt der helle Mond, which she sings very movingly. But Mignon (Kennst du das Land?) which should have been a great performance was crowded onto a single side, and it is hopelessly rushed. In general there is some lack of clarity in the unpublished songs. Raucheisen is mostly in good form, but he finds tough going in Erkönig and Auf dem Wasser zu singen suggests a rough boat ride. To me Meine Rose remains the gem of the collection.

ALESSANDRO VALENTE, tenor (b. 1890)

LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci--Recitar... Vesti la giubba; PUCCINI:

Tosca--Recondita armonia; Turandot--Non piangere, Liu; ...Nessun dorma; Manon Lescaut--Tu, tu, amore? (with Emma Lattuada); GIORDANO: La cena delle beffe--Calato in Arne... Ahi che tormento; ...Tornato e Maggio; PUCCINI: Fanciulla del West--Or son sei mesi; ...Ch'ella mi creda; Tosca--E lucevan le stelle; Madama Butterfly--Addio, fiorito asil (with Benvenuto Franci); MEYERBEER: Africana--O paradiso; BIZET: Carmen--Il fior; MASCAGNI: Serenata; GIORDANO: Andrea Chenier--Si, fui soldato. Preiser LV 236.

Valente's claim to fame was that he made the first recording of the two tenor arias from Turandot in 1927, when the opera was new. With this he "caught on," especially in England; other recordings followed, notably the first complete electrical Pagliacci. His career in "live" opera was quite unspectacular, though he came to London in 1912 to sing Turiddu under Mascagni himself. He remained in England, devoting his time mostly to vaudeville. Leo Riemens, whose notes tell us all we are likely to learn about Valente, admits that none of his later records matched the original Turandot coupling, perhaps excepting the Manon Lescaut duet with Emma Lattuada (sister of conductor Sabajno). Valente hardly qualifies as a "great" singer, but he knows the tricks of the Italian tenor trade. His voice strikes me as rather "loose" in quality, lacking the intensity that can make the standard arias exciting.

MARIA IVOGÜN, soprano (b. 1891)

MOZART: Zauberflöte--O zittre nicht; ROSSINI: Barbiere di Siviglia--Frag' ich mein beklommen Herz; VERDI: Rigoletto--Teurer Namen, dessen Klang; Traviata--'S ist seltsam... Er ist es... 'S ist Torheit... Von der Freude Blumenkränzen; MOZART: Entführung aus dem Serail--Martern aller Arten; ...Welch' ein Geschick! (with Karl Erb); CORNELIUS: Barbier von Bagdad--O holdes Bild in Engelschöne (with Erb); BIZET: Carmen--Sonntag war's (with Erb); VERDI: O lass uns fliehen (with Erb); PUCCINI: Bohème--Leb wohl denn, und ohne Hass! (with Erb). Court Opera Classics CO 380.

Surely Ivogun needs no introduction. Her records are numerous and not uncommon; her success as a teacher is attested by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Rita Streich, among others. The point of interest here is in the fact that all but two of the recordings, dating from 1916-17, remained unpublished (the exceptions are Ah, fors è lui and Parigi, o cara). To be sure there were published takes of the same music, but most of these are firsts. However, four of the five duets with her then husband Karl Erb are included in the tenor's retrospective (EMI Electrola 1C 147-30771/72) and it may as well be said at once that those transfers are to be preferred. In the case of the Traviata duet the pitch here is a half tone high. And it is safe to say that the published takes of the Zauberflöte and Entführung numbers are more brilliant than these (this is probably true of the others). The one real novelty, so far as I know, is the Carmen duet. The Bohème, a kind of race-through of Mimi's farewell and the quartet that follows, with Musetta and Marcello absent, is at very best a curio. Erb has a tendency to overbalance Ivogün in these duets. The soprano was a

singer of great charm, but collectors who don't have to have everything will find her better represented elsewhere.

JOSEPH ROGATCHEWSKY, tenor (b. 1891)

GLUCK: Orphéus--Malheureux qa'ai-je fait?... J'ai perdu mon Euridice; GOUNOD: Faust--Rien!... En vain j'interroge; BIZET: Pêcheurs de perles--Je crois entendre encore; ...De mon amie fleur endormie; MASSENET: Manon--En fermant les yeux; Ah! fuyez, douce image; LALO: Le Roi d'Ys--Vainement, ma bien-aimée; MASSENET: Werther--O nature, pleine de grace; ...Lorsque l'enfant revient; ...Pourquoi me réveiller; RIMSKI-KORSAKOV: The May night--Sleep, my beauty (in Russ.); BORODIN: Prince Igor--Daylight slowly fades (in Russ.); TCHAIKOVSKI: Pique Dame--pardonne moi si je te blesse; ...Qu'est donc la vie? (in French).
Preiser LV 239

Joseph (or José) Rogatchewsky is a Russian who became, says Clemens Hoslinger in his notes, to many the most important "French" tenor of his time. Coming at age eighteen to study at the Paris Conservatoire (under Hettich and Isnardon) he fought in the French army in the First World War, then remained to make his debut in Toulouse in 1922. Later that year he appeared at the Opéra Comique. From there he went to La Monnaie in Brussels, which was to remain his home base. His voice has been fairly described as one of the most beautiful lyric tenors of his time, but I am told it was a small one. It is well displayed in the arias here chosen. He reminds us of his origins by singing the May night and Prince Igor arias in Russian. One might take a few exceptions on points of style - the Orphéus seems to me overdone, and to my taste Je crois entendre encore is a shade or two slow. That he could sing dramatically is shown in the Werther selections and again in the second piece from Pique Dame. But his most characteristic singing is in lyric numbers like Le rêve and Vainement, ma bien-aimée.

WILLI DOMGRAF-FASSBAENDER, baritone (1897-1978)

MOZART: Nozze di Figaro--Nun vergiss leises Flenan; ...Alles ist richtig... Ach, öffnet eure Augen; Don Giovanni--Feinsliebchen, komm an's Fenster; LORTZING: Undine--An des Rheines grünen Ufern; VERDI: Rigoletto--Feile Sklaven; ...Ach Gott, nur für dich erleh' ich (with Maria Cebotari); ...Du liebst ihn... Holdes Mädchen (with Cebotari, Elisabeth Waldanau, Helge Roswaenge); Trovatore--Ihres Auges himmlisch' Strahlen; Ballo in Maschera--Für dein Glück und für dein Leben; WAGNER: Tannhäuser--Wie Todesahnung... O du mein holder Abendstern; MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana--Ach, euch hat Gott hergesendet (with Hilde Schep-pan); GIORDANO: Andrea Chenier--Als Feind des Vaterlandes; ...Da ist er! Gerard? (with Käthie Heidersbach); PUCCINI: Bohème--Marcel! Sirene! (with Trude Eipperle, Peter Anders, Hilde Guden); ...Ach, Geliebte, nie kehrst du wieder (with Anders); SCHUBERT: Die Berge, D. 634; SCHUMANN: Verratene Liebe; Auf dem Rhein; Des Knaben Berglied, Des Sennen Abschied; Des Buben Schützenlied; GRIEG: Mit einer Wasserlilie; An das Vaterland; Auf der Reise zur Heimat; Jägerlied; Zur Rosenzeit; Weihnachtsschnee. Bellaphon DE 22.695, 2 discs.

Domgraf-Fassbaender is best remembered for his Glyndebourne Figaro and Guglielmo. But for the most part his career was confined to Germany, and his other recordings were made there. Some of us remember him as a film star back in the thirties. This program is a gauge of his versatility, and it gives us an opportunity to compare two of Figaro's arias in German with the Italian of the well known set. In this Non piu andrai he takes a terrifically fast pace. The Undine song is a pleasant novelty (Lortzing is very grateful for German baritones and basses) and the familiar Evening star has a certain freshness as he sings it. For the rest of three sides we have Italian opera in German, including a large chunk of Rigoletto including both La donna è mobile and the quartet. Admirers of Roswaenge and Cebotari will willingly accept the Germanic style. Of more interest to me is the last side, in which we meet Domgraf-Fassbaender the lieder singer. Die Berge is a rare choice to represent Schubert, and it shows him at his best. The five Schumann lieder are hardly better known. Grieg in German is not Grieg in the original (the exception here being Jaeger lied and Zur Rosenzeit, to texts by Uhl and Goethe) but allowing for some signs of wear in the voice they are convincingly sung. These songs were recorded in 1944 and the pianist is Raucheisen.

PETER ANDERS, tenor (1908-1954)

SCHUBERT: Die Winterreise; Einsamkeit, D. 620 Acanta (Bellaphon) DE 23.056, 2 discs.

Anders, one of the most popular German singers of his time, began his career as a very light tenor but developed into an admired Walter, Florestan, Bacchus, Siegmund and Otello. "His time," of course, covered the war years and the subsequent austerity. Like so many of his colleagues in those years he developed a strong interest in lieder, with encouragement from Michael Raucheisen, whose position in Germany was like that of Gerald Moore in England. To be sure it was not a new interest for Anders, as he had married the daughter of Lula Mysz-Gmeiner. The anonymous annotator tells us that this recording was Anders' second Winterreise. The first was made with Raucheisen in 1945, this with Gunther Weissenborn on 24 October 1948. Between the two the tenor endured not only the hard times but a vocal crisis as well. His interpretation underwent a considerable change. Fortunately I have been able to compare this release with an abridged version of the earlier performance, and can confirm the statements in the notes. In 1945 Anders was busier "interpreting." His tempi were generally looser, less steady, too free with ritards. In this later version Müller's young man, keeps walking at a brisker pace, sometimes quite fast; the singer spends less time lingering over details. The voice quality is pleasing if not greatly varied in tone color. Anders' diction is exemplary. His is a good Winterreise if not an outstanding one. The pianist in each case is in sympathy with the singer; Raucheisen is better recorded, Weissenborn's piano, as we hear it, has a rather boxy sound. Einsamkeit, which occupies the fourth side, is one of those long cantata-like affairs that Schubert occasionally perpetrated. The text by his friend Mayrhofer, is a consideration of life from

multitudinous angles, ending with an escape to nature. It was composed in July 1818, and Schubert considered it "the best thing I have done so far." I am afraid the best we can say for it is that there are lovely pages, especially at the ending, in which we hear a cuckoo and a waterfall. Anders, we are told - and certainly we will not dispute the claim - was the first to record the song. Since then we have had it from Fischer-Dieskau (in his comprehensive recording) and from Robert Holl (Preiser SPR 3288). Only a dedicated and musicianly artist would undertake such a song.

JOSEF TRAXEL, tenor (1916-1975)

MOZART: Die Entführung--Konstanze, dich wiederzusehen; ...Ich baue ganz auf deine Stärke; Don Giovanni--Nur ihrem Frieden; ...Folget der Heissgeliebten; Clemenza di Tito--Wehe mir! ist's Wahrheit oder Trug?; Così fan tutte--Der Odem der Liebe; Zauberflöte--Wie stark ist nicht dein Zauberton; BETHOVEN: Fidelio--Gott! welch' dunkel hier... In des Lebens Frühlingstagen; WEBER: Oberon--Von Jugend auf; Euryanthe --Wehen mir Lüfte Ruh'; DONIZETTI: Don Pasquale--Lass es, ach lass mich hören (with Erika Koth); Favorita--Spirto gentil; ADAM: Le postillon de Longjumeau--Freunde, vernehmet die Geschichta; NICOLAI: Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor--Horch, die Lerche singt FLOTOW: Martha--Wie das schnattert, wie das plappert (with Christian Kohn); WAGNER: Der fliegende Holländer--Mit Gewitter und Sturm; Tannhäuser--Der Bronnen, den uns Wolfram nannte; Meistersinger-Morgenlich leuchtend; BOÏELDIEU: La dame blanche--Komm, o holde Dame; PONCHIELLI: Gioconda--Himmel und Meer; BIZET: Carmen--Hier an dem Herzen treu geborgen; VERDI: Traviata --Ach, ihres Auges Zauberblick; ...Weh; mir! im Träume tief und schwer; LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci--Jetzt spielen... Hüll' dich in Tand nur; ..Nein, bin Bajazzo nicht bloss; PUCCINI: Turandot--Keiner schlafe.
Electrola EMI IC 147-30 774/79, 2 discs.

A tenor of the Roswaenge type, Traxel had a big voice and an extensive range. He was equally at home in lyric and heroic parts. His repertory extended from Monteverdi to the moderns, and he was much admired for his Bach Evangelist. He was largely self-taught, according to the notes of Wolf-Eberhardt von Lewinski, but his musical intelligence was exceptional, and in his last years he taught singing at the Stuttgart Academy. Among the parts he created was Merkur in Strauss' opera Die Liebe der Danae. This generous selection is a tribute to his versatility. The Mozart arias are for the most part graceful and stylish, though in the Così piece his attacks are less accurate than elsewhere. He manages the long runs in Il mio tesoro with a flourish. In the Fidelio and Oberon he challenges Roswaenge, and in the Postillon song he hits the high D squarely. But the quietly flowing Euryanthe air and the delightful little serenade from The merry wives of Windsor are among his most effective numbers. Spirto gentil is well sung in Italian; the Traviata, in German, is complete with cabaletta. An unusual selection is Walther von der Vogelweide's speech from Tannhäuser, rarely heard in a major voice. The Dame blanche number recalls Slezak, but Traxel gives us the extended scene. He is well matched by the assisting artists, Erika Koth in the Notturmo from Don Pasquale, and

Christian Kohn in the Martha duet, perhaps better known as Solo profugo (here for once in the original German).

Philip L. Miller

Editor's note: Court Opera Classics, Bellaphon, and Preiser records are imported by Bremen House, 218 East 86th Street, New York City, 10028.