

WAGNER: Lohengrin--Nun sei bedankt, mein lieber Schwann;
WALTER: O hör mein Lied, geliebte Maid. Gustav Walter, tenor.
Speech: Rosa Papier-Paumgartner. **SMETANA** Die verkaufte Braut--
Gern will ich dir vertrauen. Berta Foerster-Lauterer, soprano.
Phonogramarchiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft
PHA EP 7, (7"). Available from Verlag der Österreichischen
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Wien, Austria)

The Phonogramarchiv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in Vienna, is the world's oldest sound archive. Founded in 1899 by Sigmund von Exner, a physiologist, its original purpose was the study of the voice as a human organ. Though having a special interest in languages, the Archive early began to record personalities; these three members of the Hofoper were institutions in Vienna. Gustav Walter (1834-1910) is perhaps familiar to collectors of historical reissues through his three, 1905 G & T recordings. The unaccompanied sampling of his singing given here, recorded a year later (he would have been 72), sounds just a little more strained, perhaps because Lohengrin's address to the swan is more taxing than Schubert and Brahms lieder. Walter also delivers a disarming little ditty, more properly titled Ständchen, Op. 5, by Ed. Walter--perhaps a relative?

Rosa Papier-Paumgartner (1858-1932) had a short career. She made her debut at the Wiener Hofoper in 1881 and sang there until 1891, when throat trouble forced her retirement. She remained active as a teacher. Unfortunately her career was over before the days of recording, and the brief speech on this disc is all that we have of her voice. She married the pianist Hans Paumgartner and was the mother of the musicologist-conductor Bernhard Paumgartner.

The case of Berta Foerster-Lauterer is something else. Born in Prague in 1869, she died there in 1936. In 1890, she married the composer Bohuslav Foerster. From 1901 until 1914, she was one of the bright stars of the Hofoper under Mahler. Bauer lists eight titles recorded for G & T in 1903, but those are top rarities. The first selection listed is Marie's aria from The Bartered Bride, which we may assume is the same number as in this unaccompanied performance. The voice is obviously a rich soprano, and she must have been partial to Smetana's music, though here she sings the aria in German. She also gives a short speech to top off her singing. It remains only to commend the excellent transfers.

-Philip L. Miller-