

One of the first Mapleson discs presented the great unrecorded Jean de Reszke in a couple of snatches from L'Africaine and Siegfried. For the first time it was possible for collectors to hear at least an echo of this legendary voice. Unfortunately the lesson of correcting pitches had not yet been learned, and though the original ten-inch disc may now be a collector's item, it requires a good deal of adjustment for a proper hearing. Needless to say, better and corrected dubbings were later issued, and with the other Jean de Reszke fragments these may still be had on an IRCC LP.

Of the many exciting discoveries down the years, perhaps none is more intriguing than a 7-inch private recording made by Schumann-Heink at about the turn of the century. The record had been known to exist, for it heads the list of the contralto's recordings in the Bauer catalog. The title is correct as given -- Wie ein Grössen -- but the song is attributed to Franz. A copy of this little disc had been turned up by the late Reverend Harlan Kishpaugh, who offered it to IRCC for dubbing. But Bill was unwilling to issue it without full knowledge of what he had, and it was certainly no Franz song. He brought the disc to me at the Library for possible identification. As it happened the search was less difficult than expected, for the Music Division has a large collection of Schumann-Heink programs. Thus we could change the attribution from Franz to Adolf Mehrkens.

The moral to be drawn from Bill's lifework is that certain standards exist and for a man of integrity no amount of research is too much when it is a question of meeting these standards. That IRCC, the first in the field, is still in operation after 38 years is certainly significant. A few of its followers are producing successfully along similar lines, but many others have come and gone. Not one of them can match IRCC for longevity, quantity and consistent quality. I am happy to say the Club still plans to carry on. I wish it long life in the traditions of its founder.

-- Philip L. Miller

PETER HUGH REED (1892-1969)

Peter Hugh Reed, founder-editor of the longest continuously existing independent critical record magazine in the United States, died on September 25, 1969 after a lengthy illness. Founded as The American Music Lover in May of 1935, Peter Hugh Reed's magazine (later rechristened The American Record Guide) remained for more than a decade the only substantial journal of its kind in this country. Only token rivalry was offered by such house organs as the Gramophone Shop Supplement (New York City) under the editorship of the redoubtable and still very much functioning R. D. Darrell and The New Records

(published by H. Royer Smith of Philadelphia and antedating even AML/ARG in its origins).

It was the writings of Darrell and Peter Hugh Reed, which displayed for me at a tender collegiate age a splendid combination of enthusiasm and know-how, that egged me on into the sound recordings field -- and indeed, I regard them as the progenitors in fact of the 1940 Record Book, which I never would have had the temerity to undertake without the spur of their example. I have memories of many a wordy give-and-take with Peter Hugh Reed at his home in Pelham, N.Y., a bare ten-minute drive from my own just over the border in New Rochelle. My first meetings with Philip Miller and Harold Schonberg, whose tribute to Pete's memory in the October 5 Sunday New York Times is a thing of beauty, were in the American Music Lover offices in 1939.

Personal memories aside, it was Peter Hugh Reed's caring and enthusiasm, together with his knowledge and a personal charm that could cajole a whole host of highly qualified gratis or near-gratis contributors (among them Philip Miller, the late Nathan Broder, plus Robin Lanier in the audio department). Although he retired from active work on ARG in the spring of 1957, the magazine under the editorship of James Lyons has carried on very much in its earlier tradition of "joyous knowledge."

For someone whose early hopes were set on a singing career, Peter Hugh Reed achieved a splendid sublimation in AML/ARG; and what is more, he inspired many to follow his example on either a part- or full-time basis in the field of records and recording. In that sense, Peter Hugh Reed stands also as a kind of godfather to organizations such as ARSC, since his concerns, too, extended to the broader vistas of the disc as historical and aesthetic document, over and above its commercial and/or entertainment attributes.

"Let us now praise famous men,
And our fathers that begat us....
...Wise were their words in their instruction:
Such as sought out musical tunes,
And set forth verses in writing...
...These were men of mercy,
Whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten.
With their seed shall remain continually
A good inheritance...."

-- David Hall