
SOUND RECORDING REVIEWS

Three Preiser CDs:

1: **Giannina Arangi-Lombardi (1890-1951).**

Donizetti: *Lucrezia Borgia*: Com' è bello (BX 1324); M'odi, ah! m'odi (BX 1325); Verdi: *I Lombardi*: Te, Vergin santa invoco (BX 1327); O Madre, dal cielo (BX 1328); *Ernani*: Da quel dì che t'ho veduta (w. Enrico Molinari, baritone) (BX 641/642); *Il Trovatore*: Tacea la notte placida (BX 1120); *Un Ballo in Maschera*: Ma dall' arido stelo divulsa (BX 1326); Morrò, ma prima in grazia (BX 1323); *Aida*: Ritorno vincitore! (BX 385/394); Ponchielli: *La Gioconda*: O cor dono funesto (w. Giuseppina Zinetti, contralto) (BX 643); Così, mantieni il patto? (w. Enrico Molinari, baritone) (BX 645); Mascagni: *Cavalleria Rusticana*: Voi lo sapete, o mamma (BX 710); Puccini: *La Bohème*: Sì, mi chiamano Mimi (BX 1118); *Tosca*: Vissi d'arte (BX 1119).

(Preiser) Lebendige Vergangenheit 89013 (One CD: AAD/MONO) p1989 Time: 62:32

2: **Leo Slezak (1873-1946).** Weber: *Euryanthe*: Unter blüh'nden Mandelbäumen (14579u); Auber: *Die Stumme von Portici*: Des Armen Trost (11809u); Rossini: *Wilhelm Tell*: O Mathilde (w. Leopold Demuth, baritone) (11806u); Halévy: *Die Jüdin*: Grosser Gott, hör mein Fleh'n (10852u); Ach! lass dein Vaterhertz (w. Wilhelm Hesch, baritone) (11799u); Meyerbeer: *Die Hugenotten*: Ihr Wangenpaar (11131u); Nimm von mir Lieb'um Liebe! (w. Elsa Bland, soprano) (694r/695r); Meyerbeer: *Der Prophet*: Klein's von allen Erdenreichen (11802u); Herr, dich in den Sternkreisen (11801u); Wagner: *Lohengrin*: Nun sei bedankt (10815u); Höchstes Vertrau'n (10822u); Verdi: *Ernani*: Habt Dank, geliebte Freunde (10857u); *Rigoletto*: Freundlich blick ich auf diese und jene (10061u); O wie so trügerisch sind Wieberherzen (10851u); *Der Troubadour*: Dass nur für mich dein Hertz erbebt (10063u); *Ein Maskenball*: Ha, welche hohe Wonne (10816u); O sag, wenn ich fahre (10062u); Gounod: *Romeo und Julia*: Ach, gehe auf, geh auf (11156u) Goldmark: *Die Königin von Saba*: Da plätschert ein Silberquelle (485c); Du Ew'ger, der mein Aug'gelichtet (11800u).

(Preiser) Lebendige Vergangenheit 89020 (One CD: AAD/MONO) p1990. Time: 60:15

3: **Marcel Journet (1867-1933).**

Rossini: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*: La calunnia (CVE-4994-7); Wagner: *Tannhäuser*: O tu bell'astro (BVE-3010-2); *Lohengrin*: Mein Herr und Gott (BVE-2310-6); Berlioz: *La Damnation de Faust*: Devant la maison (BVE-4207-5); Gounod: *Faust*: Mais ce Dieu que peut-il pour moi? (w. Fernand Ansseau, tenor) (CS 4270-2/4271-1); Le veau d'or (CG 882-2); Vous qui faites l'endormie (CVE-3163-5); Bizet: *La Jolie Fille de Perth*: Quand la flamme (BVE-8563-3); Carmen: Je suis Escamillo (w. Fernand Ans-

seau, tenor) (CTR-3177-1); Massenet: *Thaïs*: La paix soit avec vous! (CK 2768-2); Honte! horreur! ténèbres éternelles! (CK 2769-1); Voilà donc la terrible cité! (w. Michael Cozette, baritone) (CK 2770-2/2771-2); *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*: Fleurissait une rose (CVE-4996-3); Charpentier: *Louise*: Reste, repose-toi! (CVE-36714-2); Luce: "O Salutaris (OPG-743-1); Letorey: "Ceux qui pieusement sont morts pour le Patrie" (OPG-744-1). (Preiser) Lebendige Vergangenheit 89021 (One CD: AAD/MONO) p1990. Time: 61:11

Giannina Arangi-Lombardi was one of Italy's leading dramatic sopranos during the sparse inter-war years. She made her concert debut as a contralto in 1919, her operatic debut (as Santuzza) in 1920, and after further study with soprano Adelina Stehle in Milan, emerged as a dramatic soprano in 1923. With her reputation established, La Scala became her principal artistic home until 1930, although her career was international, taking her to major houses throughout Europe (including the 1935 Salzburg Festival) and South America. One has only to listen to her recordings to appreciate Toscanini's patronage of her during his last seasons at Scala.

She recorded acoustically as a mezzo-soprano for the Fonografia Nazionale in Milan in the early to mid-twenties, and beginning in 1926 as a soprano for Columbia. This Preiser recital consists entirely of electrical Milanese Columbias, all accompanied by the Scala Orchestra under Lorenzo Molajoli. The discs with three-digit matrix numbers given in the listing above were recorded between 1927 and 1930, while those with four-digit numbers date from 1932 and 1933. Most of her Columbias still turn up with some regularity and at reasonable prices, so this CD is perhaps best purchased as a sampling. The repertory has been chosen wisely, and includes many of her greatest successes: *Aïda*, *Santuzza*, *Tosca*, *Gioconda*, and *Amelia*—the roles that we associate most closely with this breed of dark, opulent dramatic soprano.

In his liner notes, the late Leo Riemens insists that Arangi-Lombardi deserves comparison to Ponselle, not only on the basis of their similarly "dark-colored voices" and the fact that their repertories overlapped, but also because both were "bel canto singers" which he further contends "explains why Arangi-Lombardi was underestimated during her lifetime." Perhaps, but this does little to explain Ponselle's overwhelming success during the same period. Mr. Riemens offered the same argument in defense of Boninsegna (*The Record Collector*, Vol. 12, No. 1-2 (January-February, 1958) p. 13), namely, that the bel canto stylist was left adrift in an "unappreciative age." Ironically, La Boninsegna herself, in a 1937 interview with critic Max de Schauensee, was frank in expressing displeasure with her successors, and Arangi-Lombardi in particular. "No soprano produces her voice properly today," she told de Schauensee. ". . . A friend took me last year to La Scala. Arangi-Lombardi was the *Aïda*, and it was so bad I had to leave." To be sure, the two had much in common stylistically, but the fact remains that Boninsegna was the more accomplished *singer*. Compared to Boninsegna's florid 1907 "Come' è bello (Pathé 84525), 1905 "Ma dall' arido" (G&T 053065) 1905 "Morrò, ma prima in grazia" (G&T 53415), and her melting 1906 "Tacea la notte" G&T (053063), Arangi-Lombardi's readings seem clumsy and uncertain, with high notes that often are unbearably forced and out of tune, and passage work that is downright clumsy. Her voice was far more voluptuous than beautiful; her singing more mannered than stylish.

Even a 10-CD “gift pack” could not hope to do justice to tenor Leo Slezak’s enormous catalog of recordings. He was an unusually prolific recording artist. From about 1900 to 1930 he managed to leave nearly 400 souvenirs of his voice, among them operatic excerpts drawn from the four corners of the international tenor repertory, as well as an imposing number of superbly executed lieder. His huge voice took to recording exceptionally well from the very beginning, and remained more or less intact over a period of some 40 years, enabling him to record electrically with great effectiveness.

Given in the listing above are the matrix numbers of the selections included on this CD, as these best distinguish the versions represented. With one exception, the titles are 10-inch Viennese Gramophone Company recordings made between 1906 and 1908. The “Da plätschert ein Silberquelle” from *Königin von Saba* is a 12-inch recording from 1905 (G&T 042112). This is a good sampling of Slezak, but certainly not an essential one. Most items have been drawn from the tenor’s “standard” repertory which, buried under all of those German titles, includes the “Plus blanche” from *Huguenots*, “Pour Berthe” and “Roi du ciel” from *Prophet*, “Come rugiada al cespite” from *Ernani*, the “La revedrà” and “Di’tu se fedele” from *Ballo*, and a tragically abbreviated “Ah! lève-toi, soleil” from *Roméo et Juliette*. There is little from the German repertory, and nothing at all that is of great rarity—in fact, a few of the titles, as collectors will be quick to see, were even issued in the U.S. by Victor and remained in our domestic catalogs for many years. Among the highlights, the Act IV Raoul-Valentine duet from *Huguenots* with Bland (“Tu l’as dit”) is a standout, with Slezak at his most lyrical; the *Rigoletto* titles (“Questa o quella” and “La donna è mobile,” 10061u and 10851u, respectively), and the *Trovatore* “Ah sì, ben mio,” (10063u) stand up quite well, notwithstanding the brutality of their translations. The *Königin von Saba* titles, especially “Da plätschert ein Silberquelle,” are fine examples of Slezak in the music he tended to sing best. The “Roi du ciel” from *Prophet* is a peerless reading—forceful and heroic, the voice trumpet-like in its clarity and almost entirely free of the infamous Slezak wobble. But be warned. There is little here of the tenor’s splendid *mezza voce*. We get only brief glimpses in the *Trovatore* and *Stumme von Portice* arias.

Marcel Journet’s career was among the lengthiest and most distinguished of any French singer of his age. His professional activities seem to have grown increasingly varied with the passage of each decade. His repertory was large, and included in addition to the leading French and Italian bass roles, many important Wagnerian protagonists—Sachs, Hagan, Gurnemanz, and even a *Rhinegold* Wotan. Though perhaps not quite so nimble as Plançon, his voice was exquisitely flexible in the manner of other French basses, and while never as dramatically malleable as Chaliapin’s, it was still a colorful instrument. Journet’s range, especially in its baritoneal upper extension, was virtually unsurpassed in its power and focus.

Discounting the 1902 and 1903 Mapleson cylinders on which he is heard, Journet began recording in 1905 and continued until the year of his death. The records least frequently encountered are from the sessions made on either end of his long career: the 1905 Columbias, and his late electricals, especially the operatics. The rare 1912 *Roméo et Juliette* recorded for Pathé and the justly famous 1930-1 *Faust* with Berthon and Vezzani are both available on long-playing reissues, which accounts for two of the most desirable sets. The Preiser collection is an all-electrical recital, and this

alone makes it a welcome addition to Journet's scant long-playing catalog. The "BVE" and "CVE" matrix prefixes designate 1925-1926 Victors recorded in the U.S. The "CTR" matrices were recorded by HMV in 1927, the "CK"s in 1928, the "CS"s in 1929, and the "CG"s in 1930-1. All are Parisian recordings. The "OPG" matrices that finish the set are from Journet's last sessions, made in Paris in 1933. Note that among the *Faust* titles, only "Le veau d'or" (CG-882-2) is taken from the complete 1930-1 set. Given the disastrous surfaces of most early "scroll" Victors and pre-war HMVs, the transfers offered here are excellent, representing an equitable compromise between faithfulness to the originals and noise suppression. The substance and variety of the repertory speaks for itself.

Journet's electricals, the first of which were made when he was nearly sixty years old, confirm that his voice had held up remarkably well, and that only its lower reaches had diminished appreciably, although recordings made in his prime reveal that even then he was frequently on awkward ground when required to produce profoundly low notes. It was in the middle and upper registers that Journet's voice was always best, and where it remained most secure and sonorous as late as 1933.

The appearance of Preiser's "Lebendige Vergangenheit" vocal series on compact disc was inevitable. As the LPs become increasingly difficult to come by, let us hope that the entire back catalog eventually will undergo this change of format—if indeed this is what is necessary to keep them all available. Those already accustomed to Preiser's LPs, whether the "Lebendige" or "Court Opera" series, will probably be their most satisfied CD customers. The little silver versions are virtually indistinguishable from their predecessors, down to the familiar cover graphics and the reliable, if not always precise, documentation. English translations of the liner notes are a notable addition to the new format.

Collectors may want to check their holdings to compare the contents of the earlier Preiser LPs devoted to these artists in order to avoid unwanted duplication among these new CDs, such as Arangi-Lombardi (LV 267 and LV 1352), Slezak (Court Opera CO 309 and 409), and Journet (LV 55).

Preiser's transfers, however dependable, are seldom colorful. It has been demonstrated amply in recent years that much of the warmth and clarity of 78s lies in those extreme frequencies cohabited by rumble and high crackle, frequencies routinely dismissed in the past as lying beyond the reach of older recordings, especially acousticals. When suppressed during the transfer, these frequencies become irretrievable, along with much of the sparkle of the original performance. With labels like Symposium, and to a lesser extent Pearl, retaining these extreme frequencies in their transfers, albeit selectively, we are finally getting a taste of 78 rpm "high fidelity." Preiser's dubbings of early electricals are superior to their dubbings of acousticals, but the tendency to over-emphasize lethal middle frequencies at the expense of everything else is common to both. Yet, considering some of the rubbish currently on the market, their historical reissues are still leagues ahead of most. The real distinction of Preiser's contribution has always been the quantity of exceptional artists and their very rare recordings which have been made available to vocal enthusiasts for so many years. This makes any new entry in the "Lebendige" series most welcome. *Reviewed by William Shaman*

Verdi. *Requiem*

Maria Caniglia, soprano; Ebe Stignani, mezzo-soprano; Beniamino Gigli, tenor; Ezio Pinza, bass; Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera, Tullio Serafin, conductor. Recorded August 1939. Angel/EMI CDH 7 63341 2 (1 CD).

EMI's reissue of this classic performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem* is part of a series devoted to the recordings of Beniamino Gigli, including his eight complete operas. This is clearly a soloists' *Requiem*, and rarely has such a distinguished cast been assembled for this work. For many vocal collectors, Gigli has been the primary reason for owning this recording. Few tenors have sung with greater ease of production and mastery of breath control. Yet it is understandable why his performance has not met with universal acclaim. By this point in his career (he was 49 years old at the time) Gigli had developed a number of mannerisms and affectations which often disturb those who prefer the controlled intensity of Martinelli or Bjoerling. Gigli's sobs, portamenti and aspirations, such as "Ho-ho-ho-hostias" in the *Offertorio*, are not suited necessarily to sacred music. However, Verdi's *Requiem* is not necessarily a purely sacred composition. It is a highly dramatic, even theatrical masterpiece which cannot be judged or categorized by the same criteria applied to Brahms or Berlioz.

Gigli's colleagues, by contrast, epitomize vocal nobility, particularly Pinza and Stignani. Pinza's rich, velvety voice was ideally suited to this music. Even in the most dramatic passages, such as the "Confutatis maledictis," Pinza sang with unflinching line and beauty of tone, while never sounding under-powered. Stignani remains one of the great Verdi mezzo-sopranos of the century, perhaps surpassed only by Giulietta Simionato in sheer vocal richness and power. Stignani and Pinza ably demonstrate that the easier the production and the lighter the breath support, the more powerful the tone will be, if the voice has been properly trained and developed. Only Maria Caniglia fails to measure up to the vocal standards of her time, singing consistently flat above the staff. Tullio Serafin understood the operatic qualities of this work, particularly its stylistic kinship with *Aida*. Serafin was an ideal singer's conductor, and few others have allowed their soloists to achieve such consistent *bel canto* throughout. Yet, he raises the orchestra and chorus to levels of tremendous excitement in the more dramatic choral passages. The Rome forces, both chorally and orchestrally, are rather unpolished but their technical shortcomings do not detract from this remarkable performance.

The technical quality of this reissue, unfortunately, is well below the level of the performance. Although Keith Hardwick is credited as having transferred the original 78s to tape, this recording does not resemble his previous work in any way. In fact, it appears that two entirely different transfers of the originals were pieced together for this CD. This reviewer owns the original 78 rpm set and was able to refer to them for comparison. Some portions of this release are much more reverberant than others, either due to the use of two different equalizations or the addition of artificial reverb to one set of transfers. There is actually a splice between these two transfers near the end of the "Ingemisco." Gigli is surrounded by an acoustic resembling the originals for most of the aria, but at the phrase beginning "Statuens in parte dextra" there is an audible splice, and the sound becomes extremely reverberant. The "Ingemisco" is complete on a single 78 rpm side, with no such change in the character of the sound from beginning to end. What possible reason could the engineers have had for splicing to a different transfer before the 78 side was complete?

Another bad tape edit actually has resulted in the removal of one beat of music. Just before Gigli sings “Kyrie eleison”, where the full chorus follows the basses singing “luceat eis,” one beat of music has been excised, resulting in a measure of 3/4 time in this 4/4 section. What is more difficult to understand is the fact that this splice does not occur where 78 Sides 1 and 2 are joined. The missing beat has been removed a full two measures before the end of Side 1.

EMI has used the Cedar Audio Restoration Process on this reissue. Whether or not the somewhat muffled high frequencies are due to Cedar, or to another problem with these transfers is unknown. Keith Hardwick has produced many truly outstanding reissues for EMI. Bruno Walter’s 1935 Act I of *Die Walküre*, with Lauritz Melchior, Lotte Lehmann, and Emanuel List, sounds absolutely astonishing on the EMI CD (CDH 7 61020 2); it nearly qualifies as a high fidelity recording. Mr. Hardwick undoubtedly prepared at least some of the disc-to-tape transfers for the Verdi *Requiem*. However, something went very seriously wrong between his work and the final production of this CD. One can only hope that this is not a preview of future EMI reissues. *Reviewed by Gary A. Galo*

Simon Barere at the Carnegie Hall

Transcription disc recordings of works on Carnegie Hall recitals given by Simon Barere on: (a) May 17, 1946; (b) November 18, 1946; (c) March 9, 1947; (d) November 11, 1947; (e) February 7, 1949; (f) Date unknown. Previously unpublished recordings marked with an asterisk (*). Appian Publications & Recordings.

Volume One: CDAPR 7007 (2 CDs). Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major (a*, with David Brockman conducting unnamed orchestra); *Sonetto 104 del Petrarca* (c*); Sonata in B minor (d); *Rapsodie espagnole* (c); *Gnomenreigen* (e*); *Valse de l'opéra Faust* (e* & b*); *Funérailles* (c); *Gnomenreigen* (b*); *Hungarian Rhapsody* No. 12 in C-sharp minor (c*). Volume Two: CDAPR 7008 (2 CDs). J. S. Bach: Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor, BWV 903 (b*); Schumann: Toccata in C major, Op. 7 (b); *Phantasiestücke*, Op. 12 No. 7: *Traumes Wirren* (d); Weber: Piano Sonata No. 1 in C major—Finale (Presto) (d*); Godowsky: *Renaissance*: No. 8 (Pastorale after Corelli), No. 12 (Gigue after Loillet), No. 6 (Tambourin after Rameau) (d*); Blumenfeld: Etude for the Left Hand (d); Glazunov: Etude in C major, Op. 31, No. 1 (b*); Scriabin: Etudes in D-flat major, Op. 8, No. 10 (c) and in D-sharp minor, Op. 8, No. 12 (d); Rachmaninoff: Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18 (f*, with unnamed conductor and orchestra); Preludes in G-sharp minor, Op. 32, No. 12, and in G minor, Op. 23, No. 5 (c); *Polka de W.R.* (d); Balakirev: *Islamey* (d).

Among the much sought piano treasures of the early LP era are the four Remington recordings featuring the playing of the legendary virtuoso Simon Barere (1896-1951). Although Remington’s publicity at the time and the reputation of the recordings has never concealed the fact, it is perhaps worth emphasizing that only the first two of those discs (199-17 and 199-35) contained studio recordings made by Barere explicitly for Remington. The pianist had signed an exclusive contract with Remington that was terminated abruptly by Barere’s tragically sudden death during a public performance of the Grieg Concerto at Carnegie Hall on April 2, 1951. Remington issued the second disc of the commercially-made recordings as a *Memorial Album*, but was reluctant to abandon this potentially profitable relationship. Consequently, upon learning that the pianist’s son Boris had had acetate recordings made

during some of Barere's Carnegie Hall recitals of the late 1940s, the company convinced the younger Barere to allow the publication of a portion of that material. The results of this relationship were Remington 199-85, the first appearance of the now-famous recordings of Liszt's Sonata and *Funérailles* reissued in APR's Volume 1, and 199-141, a program which consisted of most of the remaining titles without asterisks listed in the contents above. Two later reissues of some of this material were Turnabout THS-65001, an electronic stereo version of 199-85 and three Liszt pieces from 199-17, and Varèse/Sarabande VC 81045, which, in addition to providing a blend of both the studio and "live" material issued by Remington, embodied the first release of the two Scriabin etudes which appear in APR's Volume 2.

The appearance of APR's two double-CD sets decisively wrests the legacy of Barere's live performance recordings at Carnegie Hall from the association with Remington which has so far seemed immutable. Thanks to a close relationship with Boris Barere, all recordings presented here are taken from the original acetates. Despite the audible evidence of some discreet filtering to minimize a usually low but sometimes moderate level of surface noise, and overlooking some off-center originals which make for seasickness in the *Rapsodie espagnole* and a few other spots, these recordings sound acceptable in APR's refurbishing, although some of them still blast and distort when Barere is playing at full throttle. In any case, this issue certainly supersedes Remington's four-decade-old efforts on behalf of these recordings, if only because Remington's pressings were far from ideal.

Of even greater interest than sonic improvement is the presence on these discs of many previously unpublished recordings. Upon his untimely death, Barere was eulogized by Olin Downes and others for "a prodigious repertory," and so it is a cause for some regret that many of the titles included here duplicate those found among Barere's HMV recordings of 1934-36 (a handsome complete edition of that series—APR 7001 [2 LPs]—marked APR's inaugural publication in 1985, and this set, now including two additional takes which Barere had originally rejected, has been issued on CD: CDAPR 7001 [2 CDs]) or even some of his studio Remingtons. But among a dozen previously unavailable performances there are six pieces which Barere apparently did not otherwise record, although this reviewer may not be aware of all his earlier Parlophone recordings. Pride of place must be given to the two concerti since often it is in such larger works that pianists of Barere's generation have gone unrepresented to posterity, and since these are his only concerto recordings released to date. To hear Barere in Bach is also an unexpected opportunity, and the pianist's renown as a Liszt player makes the *Hungarian Rhapsody* a welcome addition to his discography. The other new Barere pieces on these discs are the Weber and the Corelli-Godowsky. One eagerly awaits Volume 3 in this series, as it includes many works with which Barere has not been previously associated on records. Prominent among them are Beethoven's Sonata in E minor Op. 90, Schumann's *Carneval*, and a great deal of Chopin.

To piano buffs, these two recitals are self-recommending, since Barere's reputation as a technical superman of the piano in a generation renowned for great virtuosi seems not to be tarnishing as the years go by. And even in our day, when note-perfect renditions of difficult music have become commonplace, one must admit that Barere obviously possessed remarkable technical abilities. Important among these are extraordinary facility and enormous power—two qualities which do not invariably coincide in the same player—but also a clear, rounded melodic tone whose

prominence in relation to accompanying textures is just short of Hofmann's. Barere's repertory, however, tended to gravitate towards works in which he could display overt virtuosity. In music that is more reflective he often seems anxious to return to the athletic world of pianistic pyrotechnics. And at its best, Barere's playing in technically difficult and showy music possesses an energy and verve that provokes adjectives like "staggering" or "breathtaking." Such daring! Such drive! If the listener is in the right frame of mind, the elemental excitement of some of this playing can provide a powerful adrenaline rush.

All too often, however, Barere pushes his power and velocity to extremes that cause even his stupendous technical equipment to do less than justice to the details of the music he plays. Even, or especially, for a technician of Barere's caliber, the decision to play as fast as possible over long stretches of time means that some passages will be played more quickly than those which present more complicated technical demands. And, indeed, Barere unabashedly storms through some of the more aggressive pieces with fluctuations in tempo determined only by level of technical difficulty. When the going is easy (for him) he sprints; when it is more difficult he slows down and lets the labor show. This procedure not only seems rhythmically unsettled, but also leads the listener to believe that the pianist has little concern with making music out of the notes he is playing, since tempo is neither controlled nor consciously manipulated. Melodic lines and harmonic shaping are washed away in a muddy sea of noisy and often over-pedaled energy. In such instances, the sometimes blasty condition of the acetates (even at their best there is usually a subtle lack of clarity) renders climactic passages almost unlistenable. The interpretive results in such works as the Weber *moto perpetuo*, the Rachmaninoff G Minor Prelude, and the Glazunov etude are nightmarish throughout—noisy, hectic, carelessly voiced, uninflected, and as jerky as a bad player piano. Even in some of Barere's specialties, such as Schumann's Toccata and Balakirev's *Islamey*, the prevailing hyper-aggressive approach produces some of the same feeling. Despite the impression of formidable technical prowess, a sober examination of the playing at any moment in these pieces shows a performer whose pianism is consistently unpolished. Stated differently, Barere's virtuosity is an attitude, while his runaway tempi and large dynamic splashes are by-products of that frame of mind.

Thankfully, Barere's most successful performances here are in the largest works—the Liszt Sonata and the Rachmaninoff Concerto. Barere's Liszt Sonata has long been regarded as one of the most imposing recorded accounts of this much-abused score, and it is good to have it back in circulation. Here one hears some unruly playing, but in this grand conception such moments are clearly recognizable as occupying an emotional extreme; just as much weight is placed on more restrained, poetical elements. Further, Barere seems to be more aware of the expressive potential of silence here than anywhere else in his recorded output, and with its aid achieves an aristocratic, magisterial repose that usually eludes him. The Liszt Sonata is famous and important for its thematic transformations, and some performances project the fluidity and questing uncertainty of that process. Barere's interpretation, by contrast, is a more tangible affair which realizes a convincingly stylized drama based on theatrically appropriate treatments of the themes in their various manifestations.

The Rachmaninoff makes a worthy partner for this important performance. True, Barere suffers through a stretch of technical lapses for the first minute of the finale, a movement which brings out his baser exhibitionistic tendencies and finds

him leading the orchestra even in passages where the piano's material is subsidiary to the orchestra writing. The recorded balance strongly favors the piano throughout both concerti, and in this movement Barere's extroversion makes the piano's dominance seem especially unmusical. The first two movements, however, contain some of Barere's mellowest and most introspective playing, to which sustained lyricism and rich tone are prominent contributors. The Liszt Concerto, alas, receives the kind of shallow, frenetic performance that has unjustly given this work a bad name. Since Barere was trained in an environment in which the soloist was of paramount importance in concerto playing, it is appropriate that neither of the undistinguished-sounding orchestras recorded here has been identified.

The rest of the performances are also a mixed bag, but better appreciated when heard singly rather than consecutively—halfway through a whole recital of this playing one begins to be irritated by the persistent devil-may-care extroversion. The Bach is remarkably poised despite a tautness and coloristic sense which, especially in the *Fantasia*, suggests Liszt more than Bach. The fugue subject, however, is solemnly and carefully intoned, and its working out never lures Barere into uncontrolled pathos. The same cannot be said for the Godowsky arrangements, which hurtle forward with a brittleness completely foreign to the spirit of Godowsky's own leisurely, loving, elaborately colored renditions of his own music and arrangements. Barere's G-sharp Minor Prelude of Rachmaninoff, however, effectively captures the glacial nostalgia that is this piece's unique quality. The remarkable performance of the Blumenfeld left-hand study is so lovingly phrased and musically conceived that one almost forgets to revel in the astounding—but for once, unheralded—virtuosity Barere demonstrates. And although the right hand sounds hurried and unsettled in *Traumes Wirren*, the left-hand chords are warm and feathery in a way that considerably offsets the unseemly haste of the filigree. Of the Scriabin etude performances, that in D-flat is notable for a vigorously accented treatment of the staccato notes which customarily invite a lighter, more graceful response.

Liszt gives Barere the opportunity for some high-voltage playing that satisfies only in part. Neither performance of *Gnomensreigen* comes close to being witty or puckish—these gnomes chase each other grimly rather than dancing, and their pell-mell momentum causes the tempo to lurch noticeably when technical demands change. *Funérailles* receives a worthwhile rendition full of powerful tone and dramatic pacing, while the *Petrarch Sonetto* strives to make a grand statement rather than to establish the customary intimate and lyrical framework. The *Hungarian Rhapsody* and the *Rapsodie espagnole* have enormous climaxes and extended passages of quiet glitter. Barere's technical security is in turn overwhelming and overwhelmed; the results seem more sporting than aesthetic, despite the grandeur of the pianist's large-scale conception in each piece. The *Faust Waltz* begins thrillingly with unusual clarity and poise, but the ending, taken from an earlier performance, lapses into incomprehensible banging.

APR is now the leading source for Barere recordings. Its HMV set is probably the most worthwhile of the three so far released, since it presents the essential Barere repertory, seems more considered than the live performances from a technical standpoint, and possesses greater clarity of recorded sound. All of this makes it an ideal introduction to Barere's playing. But the two sets issued here, although three of the four discs run less than 50 minutes each including applause, do contain treasures. The Liszt Sonata and *Funérailles*, the Rachmaninoff G-sharp Minor Prel-

ude and part of the Concerto, and the Blumenfeld are played with real distinction. In these pieces, Barere's conception of the music harnesses his tendency toward overt technical display and causes his pianism to serve expressive ends.

Producer Brian Crimp writes at length and with glowing enthusiasm about Barere's playing as revealed on these and other recordings, and hopes for a reassessment of his reputation. As a reading of the foregoing comments makes clear, this reviewer is scarcely inclined to name Barere as worthy of a high place in any musical pantheon. But his is an individual and readily identifiable style, and perhaps some who are understandably starved for anything resembling the grand manner of Romantic pianism will find pleasure and satisfaction listening to these recordings. Others, who admire the great recorded mementos of Hofmann, Rachmaninoff, Godowsky, and Friedmann at their best, may find it difficult to avoid feeling outrage when confronted with Barere's musical insensitivity and unrelievedly visceral interpretive outlook. *Reviewed by David Breckbill*

Enrico Caruso

The Complete Caruso—Including the Original Victor Talking Machine Company Master Recordings. RCA Victor Gold Seal 60495-2-RG. 12 CDs.

The Caruso Edition, Vol. I, 1902-1908. Pearl EVC I. 3 CDs.

The Caruso Edition, Vol. II, 1908-1912. Pearl EVC II. 3 CDs.

Enrico Caruso—Opera Arias and Songs, Milan 1902-1904. Angel/EMI Great Recordings of the Century CDH 7610462. 1 CD.

Since the LP record first appeared over 40 years ago, admirers of the vocal art of Enrico Caruso have been offered several collections of the legendary tenor's complete recordings, only to find they were neither complete nor consistently well-produced. Both RCA Victor and Pearl are now offering collections which hold the promise of filling that void. The RCA Victor set is packaged handsomely in a cardboard box holding three jewel cases which contain four CDs each, along with a 242 page booklet. The box is printed in gold on a maroon background in a style resembling the Victor Red Seal catalogs from the early 1920s. The CDs are printed with the red acoustic-style label used by the Victor Company after 1914, the Victor label most familiar to collectors of acoustical recordings. Altogether, the packaging is extremely well thought out and attractive. The booklet contains two informative articles, "Caruso in His Time" by Michael Scott, and "Caruso and the Victor Talking Machine Company" by William C. Moran. A bibliography also is provided, listing five excellent sources which were used in the preparation of this collection. The booklet's size is due, in part, to the inclusion of translations in German, Italian and French.

Cross-referencing of the Caruso recordings could not be more complete. In addition to the chronological contents of each CD, there are listings by composer, opera title, title of each selection, first line of each selection, as well as lyricist. There is also a list of assisting artists, including singers, instrumental soloists, and composers who served as accompanists. Only the chronological listing could be improved upon. Recording dates and matrix numbers are meticulously documented, but original Victor catalog numbers are not included. This will make it difficult for many collectors to distinguish between "published" recordings, that is, those shellac pressings which originally were issued by Victor with acoustic-style labels and catalog numbers, and those which were "unpublished," surfacing later as test pressings, electrical transcriptions on 78 rpm discs, and/or LP records.

Both the Bolig¹ and Moran² discographies list the total number of extant 78 rpm sides recorded by Caruso, including those unpublished items known to exist, as 245. There are no discrepancies between these two sources regarding the total number of titles found and issued to date. The RCA Victor booklet lists all 245 items among the contents of their *Complete Caruso*, but one item actually is missing (more on that below).

The title of the RCA Victor collection gives the impression that all of the Victor recordings have been newly transferred from the original masters. Such is not the case, however. All of the recordings previously issued on LP by RCA in their Soundstream-processed *The Complete Caruso* are presented here from the same transfers. These originally were prepared by Dr. Thomas G. Stockham, Jr., developer of the process and President of Soundstream, Inc. at the time the LPs were issued. The Soundstream series began with vol. 4 and ended with vol. 16. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 would have contained all of the Milan recordings from 1902-04, the piano-accompanied Victors from 1904-05, as well as a few later items not included on the previous LPs. However, the first three volumes actually were never issued, leaving their first *Complete Caruso* an unfinished project.

RCA Victor has attempted to rectify that situation with the issue of this CD collection. All of the Milan recordings and 1904-05 Victors have been newly transferred from the originals by William R. Moran, founder and Honorary Curator of The Archive of Recorded Sound at Stanford University. Mr. Moran also has supplied transfers of two later items not included on the LP edition. The most unusual of these is the opening tenor solo from the *Rigoletto* Quartet, recorded on January 25, 1917, presumably as a test for the complete version with Galli-Curci, Perini and de Luca. This recording first was issued by the Stanford Archive on a seven-inch 33 1/3 rpm disc. The second item is the 1917 version of "M'apparì tutt'amor" from *Martha*. Volume 14 of the RCA LP series actually contained the 1906 version of this aria, where the 1917 recording was supposed to have appeared.

Mr. Moran's transfers of the Milan recordings and the 1904-05 Victors generally are very good in terms of overall sound quality, but he does not appear to have made a firm decision regarding the pitch reference for these recordings. Aida Favia-Artsay made a convincing case for pitching the Milan recordings closer to A=435 Hz rather than the customary A=440Hz, the latter being correct for all of the American recordings.³ This writer firmly agrees that the pitch standard for the Milan recordings should be no higher than A=438. If the Milan recordings are pitched at A=435 or A=438, there is a more natural development of Caruso's vocal timber when the 1902 recordings are compared to his later American records. In addition, Caruso's vibrato sounds faster than it should if the Milan recordings are pitched at A=440. It is most important that the pitch reference remain constant. Mr. Moran has transferred the April 11, 1902 Gramophone and Typewriter Company (G&T) recordings at A=435, but the November 30 and December 1, 1902 G&T's are in the 438 to 440 range, as are the April 1903 Zonophones. The three Anglo-Italian Commerce Company (AICC)/Pathé cylinders are inconsistent, with "E lucevan le stelle" from *Tosca* at A=435, Pini-Corsi's "Tu non mi vuoi piu ben" at A=438 and "Qui sotto il ciel" from *Les Huguenots* at A=440.

The difference between A=440 and A=435 is less than one-quarter step and many readers may believe that this is nitpicking. To these ears, however, the difference is significant. Since Mr. Moran did not make a firm decision regarding the pitch

reference for these recordings, Caruso's timbre and vibrato change from one recording session to the next. Discrepancies such as these can arise when the speed of the recordings is determined by setting the turntable according to number of revolutions per minute thought to have been used at the original sessions, as opposed to using musical pitch as the guide.

One of Mr. Moran's transfers is nearly one-half step sharp by either pitch reference, that being the 1903 Zonophone version of Zardo's "Luna fedel." All of the other selections in this collection are correctly pitched, in accordance with Favia-Artsay. Incidentally, this reviewer uses a Korg Model WT-12 Chromatic Tuner for determining correct pitch. The Korg tuner allows the pitch reference to be varied from A=433 to as high as A=447.

Another factor which makes this collection somewhat frustrating is the juxtaposition of two radically different philosophies regarding restoration of historical recordings. The Soundstream-processed material sounds very different from the more conventional transfers provided by Moran, making a study of Caruso's vocal development rather difficult.

Also included in non-Soundstream transfers are the three unpublished items from 1917 first issued by RCA in their 1973 Caruso Centennial album (ARM4-0302). Although Dr. Stockham is credited with these items as well, they are obviously not his work. They are the same transfers used in ARM4-0302, and the transfer engineer remains anonymous. All three are alternate takes of previously issued recordings, including a *Lucia* Sextet from January 25, along with Tosti's "L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra" and "Oh! Lumière du jour" from Rubinstein's *Néron*, both recorded on April 15 of that year. In each case, the unpublished take appears first, in a conventional transfer, followed by the published version processed by Soundstream. However, one item is amiss, that being the Tosti song. When this writer analyzed each of the allegedly unpublished items included in ARM4-0302, performance differences were found which, in most cases, made it easy to verify that the recordings were different from their published counterparts.⁴ Caruso was an imaginative and spontaneous singer, who never performed a piece *exactly* the same way twice.

In the case of "L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra," the phrase "Veder non voglio il giorno" is the key. In the unpublished take (matrix no. B-19484-1) the two syllables of the word "giorno" are sung as two quarter notes on the second and third beats of the measure, whereas in the published version (B-19484-2) they are sung as two eighth notes on the second beat, followed by a quarter rest on the third. In the CD collection, RCA Victor actually has issued the *unpublished* take twice, back to back, even though the matrix numbers indicate that both versions are present. The first time around, take 1 is presented in a conventional transfer, followed immediately by the Soundstream version. The sound is so radically different, that one is led immediately to conclude that they are two different recordings. The above musical analysis indicates otherwise. RCA had made the same error on the LP collection; Volume 14 contained take one, even though the jacket listed the published take two.

This raises a question about the entire Soundstream project. Did Dr. Stockham work from original 78 rpm pressings, or did he use tapes supplied to him by RCA? There is strong aural evidence to indicate that actually he applied the Soundstream process to tapes and not to original discs. The Soundstream process was promising in certain respects. Caruso's voice was presented with a warmth sometimes lacking on conventional transfers, and the horn resonance problems associated with acousti-

cal recording were eliminated, as claimed. What was unfortunate about the Soundstream transfers was the quality of the original source material. Instead of using the best available copies, RCA apparently supplied tapes they had made for previous LP reissues. Many of the copies used were very noisy, some incredibly so. Perhaps the worst example is *Senza nessuno* by de Curtis, recorded September 11, 1919. Although the Soundstream process minimized the high frequency surface noise of the original recordings, the low frequency noise actually was increased, resulting in a constant rumble accompanying nearly every selection. This was, perhaps, the most disturbing side effect of the Soundstream process.

RCA was notorious for applying artificial reverberation to LP reissues of historical material, including many recordings of Caruso. It can be heard on several of the Soundstream-processed selections, including "Inspirez-moi, race divine" from Gounod's *La Reine de Saba*, recorded 2-5-1916, and "De mon amie, fleur endormie" from Bizet's *Pearl Fishers*, recorded 12-7-1916. There is also a trace of reverberation on "Deh, ch'io ritorni" from *L'Africana*, made during his last recording session on September 16, 1920. In fact, it would appear that the source for this recording is the same tape RCA used for the 1962 album *Caruso: The Voice of the Century* (LM-2639). Had Stockham used original pressings, he most certainly would not have applied reverberation to a select few, leaving the others unscathed.

RCA was fully aware of Favia-Artsay's research on the correct playback speeds of the Caruso recordings. Although they previously had issued literally dozens of Caruso recordings transferred at the wrong speeds, they corrected this problem when they prepared the Soundstream LPs. Since it appears that previously prepared tapes, rather than original 78 rpm discs, were used for the Soundstream process, it is reasonable to conclude that a variable-speed tape recorder was employed to correct errors in pitch on the original tapes.

Returning to Tosti's "L'alba separa," it is probable that Dr. Stockham was sent the wrong tape for the preparation of the Soundstream LPs, so the same error has been perpetuated on the CD collection. For those not in possession of the original recording, the published version of "L'alba separa" can be heard on several reissues, including an RCA Victor LP entitled *Caruso Sings Neapolitan Songs* (LTC-1129, first issued in 1953) and vol. 16 of Olympus Records' Caruso Series (ORL-316). The latter was a series issued in England in the late 1960s.

One editing error is rather troublesome on the RCA Victor CD collection; the two halves of the Tomb Scene from *Aida* are presented in reverse order, with "O terra addio" given first, followed by "La fatal pietra." On vol. 6 of the Soundstream LP series, they were presented in the correct sequence, but RCA somehow managed to reverse them during the preparation of the present collection. They are listed in the wrong sequence in the booklet, as well. On a positive note, RCA Victor has decided correctly that the unpublished *Rigoletto* Quartet from February 3, 1908 does not exist. Both the Caruso Centennial collection (ARM4-0302) and the Metropolitan Opera's Caruso album (MET-101) were purported to have contained this unpublished take, but actually it turned out to be the published recording of February 7. The February 3 take has never actually surfaced; that issue can finally be laid to rest.

Once again, RCA Victor has failed to produce an absolutely complete Caruso collection, though this time they are only one selection short of that goal. It is also unfortunate that they chose to rely on the previously issued Soundstream transfers

for the bulk of the collection. Enrico Caruso deserves the same careful attention that RCA Victor, so far, has given Arturo Toscanini in their ongoing collection devoted to the legendary conductor. This requires going back to the best original source material for each and every recording, as they are doing for Toscanini.

However, the RCA Victor collection cannot be totally dismissed. Aside from the lack of a consistent pitch reference for the Milan sessions, nearly all of the recordings have been reproduced at the correct speeds, and it remains to be seen whether or not Pearl will issue all of the unpublished items included in this collection, particularly the three alternate takes from 1917. The RCA Victor collection is certainly reasonably priced, and recent New York City sales have offered this set for less than \$90.00. This is most fortunate, since eventually it may prove necessary to purchase both the Pearl and the RCA Victor collections in order to own each and every extant recording of Enrico Caruso.

Rather than presenting their entire collection in a single installment, as RCA Victor has done, Pearl is issuing "The Caruso Edition" in four volumes of three CDs each. Reviewed here are Volumes I and II, since the remaining two have not yet appeared at the time of this writing. Although Pearl previously had issued two Caruso CDs, *The Caruso Edition* does not draw on any of those recordings. All of the transfers for the present Pearl edition have been newly prepared by Ward Marston. In order to obtain the best surviving copies of each recording, nine different private collections were drawn upon, including those of John R. Bolig, Ward Marston, Larry Holdridge and Mark Obert-Thorn.

Each volume of "The Caruso Edition" contains a booklet with interesting, if not revelatory notes by John Steane, including an introductory article which is duplicated in each volume, as well as specific comments on Caruso's career and the recordings in question. In his text, Mr. Steane cites specific recordings according to the discs on which they appear. Unfortunately, there does not appear to have been a producer to coordinate the listing of contents with the notes. Mr. Steane refers to the total number of discs in the entire collection, whereas the contents listings number the discs as they appear in each volume. Thus, track six on disc three in volume II is referenced as track six on disc six in the notes.

The notes and contents listings are not without errors, both typographical and factual. Mr. Steane includes the 1905 aria from *Don Pasquale* among Caruso's first recordings with orchestral accompaniment; in fact, all of the 1905 recordings are with piano. In addition, the recording dates listed for the Milan sessions are not always consistent with the best current research in this area.^{1,2,5} November 12, 1902 is the date given by Pearl for the second G&T session, but the three cited references all agree on November 30 and/or December 1 for this group. The same sources also place the AICC/Pathé cylinders no earlier than October of 1903, but Pearl lists them as "Spring, 1903." To Pearl's credit, both matrix and catalog numbers are included, and unpublished recordings are clearly labelled "unissued."

The technical work offered by Mr. Marston is of a very high caliber, with sound uniformly better than the RCA Victor set, not to mention nearly any reissues on LP records. His transfers have been done with modern electrical playback equipment, but, consistent with previous Pearl releases, radical processing of the original recordings has been avoided. He has not attempted to make these recordings sound "hi-fi" by using excessive filtering of surface noise, or by resorting to digital restoration systems such as Cedar, No-Noise and Soundstream. Yet due to careful selection

of the best possible copy of each recording, the noise is not excessive for recordings of this vintage. Needless to say, not a trace of artificial reverberation has been used on any of these recordings, giving the listener an honest aural picture of the originals. Best of all, with only one transfer engineer at the helm, the sound is remarkably consistent throughout.

Ward Marston has paid meticulous attention to the pitch of the original recordings. Mr. Marston has, however, chosen A=440 as the pitch reference for the Milan recordings, but he has done so uniformly, resulting in a consistent Caruso timbre from one selection to the next. Generally, Mr. Marston's transfers of the Milan recordings are less noisy than those done by Mr. Moran for RCA Victor. All of the recordings in Volumes I and II have been pitched in accordance with Favia-Artsay, with the exception of three selections which are sure to generate controversy. The first and most controversial is the February 20, 1907 recording of the Quartet from *Rigoletto*, with Bessie Abott, Louise Homer and Antonio Scotti. The only other recording made by Caruso on that day was his extraordinary "O Paradiso!" from Meyerbeer's *L'Africana*, which was recorded at score pitch, at the very common Victor speed of 76.60 rpm. Yet the *Rigoletto* Quartet requires a very unusual speed of 80.00 rpm in order to play at score pitch. In a letter to this reviewer, Dr. John Bolig wrote that he and Ward Marston spent an entire morning listening to this recording and concluded that Caruso and company had, in fact, transposed the Quartet down one-half step, which makes the speed of this recording 76.60 rpm.

Transposition was not uncommon during Caruso's time, but lowering the *Rigoletto* Quartet was practically unheard of. Yet it seems unlikely that the Victor technicians would have changed the lathe speed during the recording session. Although Caruso was in magnificent form for the recording of "O Paradiso!" his voice goes sharp for an instant on the very last note. It is possible that he felt more comfortable lowering the tessitura of the Quartet after the slight mishap on the previous recording. Or perhaps soprano Bessie Abott, a singer decidedly inferior to her company, made the request. On the other hand, it is possible that the mishap at the end of "O Paradiso" was caused by a problem with the recording lathe, in which case a change in recording apparatus may have been made. It also is possible that Caruso and his colleagues moved to a different, perhaps larger, recording room for the ensemble.

To this writer, the transposition sounds correct. Caruso's vocal timbre more closely resembles that of the other recordings made around the same time, including his most famous recording, "Vesti la giubba" from *Pagliacci*, which was made at his next recording session, March 17, 1907. Played at score pitch, his timbre is lighter, and his vibrato noticeably faster than on other contemporary recordings. Fortunately, listeners may decide for themselves in what key the Quartet was recorded, since Pearl offers the selection at both speeds. This level of commitment is rare among record companies and should be applauded.

The other two controversial choices in speeds are both from the November 6, 1909 session. Six recordings were made that day, and four of them reproduce at score pitch when the speed is 75.00 rpm. Yet "O tu che in seno agli angeli" from *La Forza del Destino* is 1/2-step flat at this speed, as is Tosti's song "Pour un baiser." In the case of these recordings, there was absolutely no reason for Victor to have changed lathe speeds for two of the selections. The matrix numbers are consecutive for the entire session; "Pour un baiser" was recorded first and the aria from *La*

Forza was third. It seems a virtual impossibility that the lathe speed would have varied back and forth between 78.26 and 75.00 rpm. Aurally, the selections in question sound correct at the speeds Mr. Marston has chosen. In addition, a friend of this writer has sheet music to the Tosti song in A-flat Major, the key which results from playback at 75.00 rpm, so a case of transposition may not even apply here.

Although the title of Pearl's collection gives no indication that the anthology will necessarily be complete, the notes refer to the anthology as "this complete edition of Caruso's recordings." Volume II ends with recordings from *Martha* made on January 7, 1912, and so far every extant recording, published and unpublished, has been included. Pearl's notes even mention the allegedly unpublished *Rigoletto* Quartet from Feb. 3, 1908, citing ARM4-0302 and concluding that the recording included in that set was, in fact, the familiar published version. It would appear that Pearl is considering every unpublished item, including those which appeared in the RCA Caruso Centennial collection. If this proves true, then Pearl will be the first and only label to have issued the complete extant recordings of Enrico Caruso. The first two volumes must be considered indispensable to any serious Caruso collector; if the remaining installments result in a complete collection, Pearl will have produced a milestone. Volumes III and IV of the Pearl "Caruso Edition" are expected to be issued by the summer of 1991, in which case a review should appear in the Fall 1991 issue of the *ARSC Journal*.

EMI's collection of Caruso's 1902-1904 Milan recordings contains one version of each aria and song recorded by the tenor during the course of his sessions for G&T, Zonophone and AICC. The G&T versions are given preference, with recordings from the other companies used for selections not recorded by G&T. Caruso made 22 recordings for G&T, but only two were duplicated. "Celeste Aida" from Verdi's *Aida* and "Dai Campi" from Boito's *Mefistofele* were made during his first recording session, on April 11, 1902 and were re-made during his second session, on November 30 of that year. For the current CD, EMI has chosen the earlier, and rarer, versions of these two arias.

Transfer engineer Keith Hardwick, a name justifiably admired by collectors of historical recordings, has provided the best transfers ever done of these recordings, Caruso emerging with a vividness and presence which belies their age. The surface noise, particularly on the G&T recordings, is remarkably unobtrusive, again considering the vintage of the originals, yet there is no evidence of excessive filtering. EMI has been extremely conscientious regarding preservation of the original metal parts of recordings made by their predecessors, His Masters Voice and G&T. Mr. Hardwick has extracted remarkable sound from many of his reissues using vinyl pressings made from those metal parts, which have far less surface noise than the original shellac records. The extraordinary sound of the G&T recordings would indicate that metal parts were used in the preparation of this CD; if not, then Mr. Hardwick has had access to original pressings in unusually fine condition.

Several of Caruso's Milan recordings are of considerable historical importance because they capture the tenor in roles he created. The first G&T session included two arias from Franchetti's *Germania*, exactly one month after the world première of that opera. Two of his "creator" recordings feature the composer as accompanist, lending an additional aura of authenticity to his performances. Francesco Cilea accompanies Caruso in "Non più nobile" from *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and "Amor ti vieta" from *Fedora* presumably is accompanied by Umberto Giordano. EMI does not credit Giordano as accompanist, and there is still some controversy regarding his

alleged presence on this recording. However, the late Martin Sokol cited a Gramophone Company advertisement in which a letter from the composer was quoted: "Enthusiastic over the marvelous Monarch Gramophone, I accede with pleasure to your request to have my Fedora sung by my friend Caruso, I myself seated at the piano."⁵

Although the AICC cylinders were technically quite inferior to the G&T recordings, they contain two selections which Caruso never recorded for any other label. The most interesting of these is "Qui sotto il ciel" from Meyerbeer's *Gli Ugonotti*. Caruso was highly regarded as one of the last great Meyerbeer singers, following in the footsteps of Tamagno and de Reszke, but he left only a handful of recordings of that composer's music. Despite the primitive sound, this is an extremely important Caruso recording, and Keith Hardwick's transfer is superior to any others which have been issued.

Mr. Hardwick has pitched these recordings at A=438, consistently. Correct playing speeds, combined with the best sound likely to be heard from these recordings, makes this disc invaluable. Serious collectors who purchase either of the complete collections discussed above, must consider the EMI CD an essential supplement. Bravo to Keith Hardwick and EMI for providing a model of how historical reissues should be produced. *Reviewed by Gary A. Galo*

Notes:

¹Bolig, Dr. John R. "A Caruso Discography." In Michael Scott, *The Great Caruso*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

²Moran, William R. "Discography of Original Recordings." In *Enrico Caruso: My Father and My Family*, Enrico Caruso, Jr. and Andrew Farkas, Amadeus, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1990.

³Favia-Artsay, Aida. *Caruso on Records*. The Historic Record (1965).

⁴Galo, Gary A. "Caruso: The Unpublished Recordings of ARM4-0302 and the Question of Authenticity." *Antique Phonograph Monthly*, Vol. 7, No. 9 (1984).

⁵Sokol, Martin. "The Pre-Victor Recordings of Enrico Caruso," *Antique Phonograph Monthly*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1977).

CONGRES DU CAIRE: Arab Art and Folk Music, 1932.

Paris, Institut du Monde Arabe/Bibliothèque Nationale, 1988. Two CDs packaged with illustrated book, APN 88/9-10.

Developments in music theory, analysis and teaching methods, along with marked differences between theoretical considerations and actual performance practice, led to the founding of the Institut de Musique Orientale in Cairo in 1929. The Institut hosted an International Congress of Arab Music from 28 March to 3 April 1932, following two weeks of conferences. A number of important figures in the Arab music world were in attendance from Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey. Observers and participants from the West included musicologists Erich von Hornbostel, Egon Wellesz, and Curt Sachs, along with composers Paul Hindemith and Bela Bartók.

Bartók, along with Mansur Awad, supervised recordings by resident and visiting singers and musicians; 335 out of 360 wax masters survived the trip from Alexandria to Manchester for processing by HMV. Apparently (the notes aren't clear), copies were pressed in limited quantities for archival use and never put in the

marketplace. With this set, the Phonothèque Nationale has launched the publication of all 335 originals.

This sampler comes in an attractively boxed set containing two CDs and a book containing photos and 200 pages of notes in Arabic, English and French. Theoretical issues surrounding the Congress are discussed by Arab scholar and ethnomusicologist Bernard Moussali, who also has selected and annotated folk music from Egypt and art music from Baghdad on one disc, with music from the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco) on the second. He is familiar with Arabic discography and notes other versions of these tunes from the HMV, Pathé, Columbia and Baidaphon catalogs, either by these artists or as influential performances by earlier musicians. Though Moussali discusses each musical example in detail, the English translation is not always graceful or idiomatic; the ethnomusicologically uninitiated may (like me) have to read the discussions over a few times to get his drift.

The original 78s have been digitally remastered and sound fairly decent. The reproduction pitch problem was solved as the records were made, with an "A" from a pitch pipe sounded at the end of each performance, along with demonstrations of basic tunings and rhythms for each piece. Most of this has been edited out, except for one or two occasions when the pitch pipe was blown prematurely.

Despite the original theoretical and pedagogical aims of the 1932 conference, the records themselves have become its primary legacy. The spread of commercial recording from Cairo to Baghdad, beginning early in the century, already had begun to have a levelling effect in remote places, as regional music was being supplanted by styles and songs drawn from records. According to Moussali, music from the Maghreb had been particularly underrepresented on record, and the traditional ensemble performance style from the region is heard for the last time on these records from the Congress. As the thirties progressed, mass-marketing further encouraged the obsolescence of traditional music in much the same way that similar forces acted on regional and traditional music in America. When the entire body of records from the 1932 Congress is available, we will have an inspiring look—and listen—at a healthy cross-section of music from an important part of the world, captured at a critical juncture in its history. *Reviewed by Dick Spottswood*

Jane Green: Wild Romantic Blues.

Superbatone 732 (LP). "Wild Romantic Blues," "The Blues Have Got Me," "You Went Away Too Far (And Stayed Away Too Long)," "Won't Be Long (Before He Belongs To Me)," "Ida—I Do," "Somebody Like You," "My Castle In Spain," "We're Back Together Again (My Baby and Me)," "Got No Time," "If You Hadn't Gone Away," "Honey Bunch," "Mine—All Mine!,"¹ "Singin' the Blues," "Down Where the Sun Goes Down," "Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now," "Just Like a Melody."

Jane Green? If the name is unfamiliar, even if you are a 1920s aficionado, don't feel too bad. Jane Green released a total of 22 sides between December 1920 and December 1927—hardly a prolific output. All but the two 1920 sides (Pathé ((0)20480) were released on Victor beginning with 19215 (29103-2/29104-2) recorded 4 December 1923.² The present reissue includes one of the Pathé sides (the title track), eleven Victor sides (unfortunately presented not quite in chronological order), and a Vitaphone soundtrack from circa June 1928, Green's last known recording, until now thought lost.

Jane Green was a multi-faceted artist: a champion trick horse rider in the early 1910s, beauty pageant contestant, fashion trend-setter, actress, and singer. She followed the traditional route to stardom, first becoming well-known locally in the Los Angeles area³, then traveling the Vaudeville circuits, making friends in the right places, and eventually making her mark with both Ziegfield and the Schuberts. She toured as an Orpheum headliner, topped bills both in the U.S. and in London, and made a couple of movie shorts. Beginning in 1927 things began to go awry with her career. A traffic accident left her more emotionally than physically scarred, and her star began to wane. Wiped out financially in the Great Crash, eventually she made her way back to San Francisco in 1931 with failing health. Although she continued to perform on radio shows, she died that August.

All of this and more (including complete song lyrics) is documented in the very informative eight-page booklet that accompanies this disc. Author/producer Brad Kay had access to a wealth of original source materials (including correspondence, contracts, and scrapbooks preserved by Green's sister-in-law, and interviews with many of her associates and family members) to derive what is no doubt the most complete biographical entry to date.

The 78 transfers (here onto blue vinyl) are much better than most for twenties pop music (at least No-Noise and other such "improvements" were not employed, and Kay is to be commended for that). In many instances he had less than mint-condition copies with which to work, such as the Pathé side which obviously is very much worn. The Vitaphone soundtrack is particularly harsh in this respect with occasions of gut-wrenching distortion, but it does seem worthwhile to have included it for historical reasons (but why, then, leave off the other Pathé?). Nevertheless, tonal balances and pitch seem to be quite accurate throughout, and the entire production has been done with care and a high degree of professionalism. There appears to be only one other post-78 compilation of Jane Green recordings, that on Daedalian DL001 (1986, all Victor sides), and there is very little overlap between the two records. Since this reviewer has not heard it, comments cannot be made concerning the relative merits or differences between the two.

Despite Kay's enthusiastic endorsement, Green's career on records was not stellar. She made her name and vocation as a superb vaudevillian singer, and as such won the admiration of people such as the Castles⁴, Fannie Brice, Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, Sophie Tucker, Isham Jones, and Walter Donaldson (who wrote "Somebody Like You" especially for her). There are moments when her vaudevillian roots are obvious, for example, on the Gus Kahn-Isham Jones song "Ida—I Do." The song itself is decidedly average; however, Green is able to transcend the material and put it across quite convincingly and with utter sincerity.

It is unfortunate that she was part of Victor's "stables" instead of another company that could have promoted her more. As it was, she was one of Victor's multitude of vocalists, and not of "star" status either. Even though she co-starred with Isham Jones and his orchestra in 1924 on Orpheum bills, and recorded some of his songs, she never entered the studio together with him. At the time Jones recorded for Brunswick, and certainly would have benefitted from better vocalists than those who actually recorded with him. Green's usual companion in the studio was Nat Shilkret and the Victor house band, except for three sides with Leroy Shield and two with the Virginians. One wishes producer Kay had included some of these other performances, or better yet issue a complete Jane Green anthology on two discs,

although perhaps he wished to avoid any more duplication of the Daedalion record mentioned above.

Her recorded repertoire was curious as well. She never recorded many of her stage hits, such as "Everybody Loves My Baby," "I Never Knew I Could Love Anybody (Honey, Like I'm Lovin' You)," and "I'd Rather Be Blue." Those songs she did record certainly are not classics (with the exception of her never-issued renditions of "Sweet Georgia Brown"), although some were minor hits and recorded by others, showing at least some contemporary popularity. Nevertheless, she made the most of what she was given, imbuing each song with just the right sense of mood while retaining her unique vocal qualities and accent. Green is at her best on the uptempo songs such as "Won't Be Long" (an inspired performance by both Green and the band) or "We're Back Together Again." Her style was as individual as Ruth Etting's would become, and certainly more so than most vocalists of that era. This is no doubt what made her such a success on stage. While Kay may be going too far to say that "she transcends her place and time to become a voice for today," she is certainly a singer who deserves the wider recognition this release hopes to provide. *Reviewed by Jim Farrington*

Notes:

¹A discographical footnote: The matrix number listed on the jacket for this song is Victor BVE-41154-3. However, Rust (*Complete Entertainment Discography*, both editions) gives 41153-3, 41154-3 being the matrix for "My One and Only." This is corroborated by Daedalion Records DL001 (1986), another reissue of Jane Green songs. As the matrix number is not etched into the actual disc, we can only assume that this is a small typographical error.

²Two earlier Victor takes, from 13 November 1923, were rejected. Some of her later Victor discs were released on HMV, Regal, and Zonophone.

³She was born in Kentucky in 1897, not 1900 as given in Rust, and came to the West Coast in 1905 with her mother.

⁴Irene Castle, to judge by her letters to Green, befriended the singer early in Green's career, although in Castle's autobiography Jane Green is never mentioned; neither does she garner any words in Cantor's or Tucker's autobiographies, nor in most standard reference sources for that period

The Smithsonian Collection of Recordings. American Musical Theatre. Shows, Songs, and Stars. RD 0-36. Available on record, cassette, and CD.

Attempting to compile a comprehensive anthology of recordings from the golden age of the American musical stage presents a number of thorny problems. Despite the fact that performers often recorded popular songs from hit shows beginning as early as the 1890s, and although most musicals were recorded in America after the original cast album of *Oklahoma!* achieved significant popularity in 1943, there are many missing or inadequate performances. Selecting one track from each of the best of the post-1943 cast albums presents another problem: which of the show's songs best represents it out of context?

Dwight Blocker Bowers, who assembled this collection for the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings, has done a thoroughly creditable, if uninspired, job. In his "Note on the Selections," he explains that these 81 recordings "reflect significant trends, authors and performers" of the musical stage in that "great blossoming of innovation and achievement that occurred between 1898 and 1964." Although virtu-

ally no musical theatre recordings exist from before 1898, Bowers's decision to stop at 1964 seems arbitrary. Clearly, there were fewer true innovations in the American theatre between 1950 and 1964 than since 1964. For example, Stephen Sondheim's extraordinary achievements as a composer and lyricist, beginning with *Company* (1970), unquestionably mean more to the future of the musical theatre than the warmed-over Rodgers and Hammerstein imitations that predominated during the 1950s and early 1960s.

A true golden age of musicals did occur between the late 1890s and the late 1940s, and Bowers has assembled appropriate and interesting examples for most of the significant composers and artists. The primitive early recordings from Victor Herbert and Sigmund Romberg operettas, as well as such legendary performers as Lillian Russell, George M. Cohan, and Al Jolson among others, are available on earlier collections, but in this set they have been lovingly restored, and many are revelations. Although an understandable amount of surface noise proves to be a distraction in a couple of the cuts, most are surprisingly clear and permit the listener closer contact with the performer than earlier releases provided.

Lillian Russell is a particular surprise with "Come Down, My Evenin' Star," her signature song, which she performs with a touching panache. Along with Cohan and several other pre-World War I artists, Russell's performance is taken from her sole visit to a recording studio many years after the fact. The high-pitched, nasal quality of Jolson's "You Made Me Love You" from *The Honeymoon Express*, recorded in 1913, will surprise listeners more familiar with his deeply resonant baritone evident in Jolson's popular 1940s Decca recordings made in conjunction with *The Jolson Story* (1946) and *Jolson Sings Again* (1949), two films based on his life. Other vintage recordings of interest include Eddie Cantor's definitive rendition of "Makin' Whoopee" from *Whoopee* (1928) and Edith Day's charming recording of "Alice Blue Gown" from *Irene* (1919) which includes a bit of dialogue in the middle of the song. Curiously, Day comes off stiffly in "Indian Love Call" from *Rose-Marie* (1924) recorded several years after her assured *Irene* recordings. Some forgotten performers of the era are less effective, especially Anna Wheaton and James Harrod's flat rendition of Jerome Kern and P.G. Wodehouse's "Till the Clouds Roll By" from *Oh, Boy!* (1917) and John Steel's sluggish performance of Irving Berlin's "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody" from *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1919*.

One of the two musicals allotted two tracks is Kern and Oscar Hammerstein's landmark, *Show Boat* (1927). The use of two cuts permits Bowers to include two legendary performers: Helen Morgan, singing "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," and Paul Robeson in his superlative recording of "Ol' Man River." Morgan's vocal limitations matter little thanks to her emotionally potent interpretation of Hammerstein's memorable lyrics. Robeson has become indelibly identified with "Ol' Man River" through his appearance in the original London production, the 1932 Broadway revival, and the 1936 film version. Bowers wisely passed over another available version from an English recording by the song's originator, Jules Bledsoe. Robeson made numerous recordings of the song over many years, and it might have been interesting to have included a later version when Robeson altered the lyrics and his interpretation to convert the song into a pointed political statement.

Despite the familiarity of much of the material, Bowers comes up with a few surprises. "Chain Store Daisy," performed by Ruth Rubenstein from Harold Rome's *Pins and Needles* (1937), and "The Cradle Will Rock," performed by Howard da Silva

from Marc Blitzstein's 1937 show by the same name, are hard-to-find remnants of two unique socially conscious musicals of the 1930s. Most of the cuts from the 1930s are superb, especially Todd Duncan and Anne Brown's dazzling "Bess, You Is My Woman Now" from George and Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward's *Porgy and Bess* (1935), Walter Huston's mellow "September Song" from Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson's *Knickerbocker Holiday* (1938), Ethel Merman's exhilarating "I Got Rhythm" from the Gershwins' *Girl Crazy* (1930), and Mary Martin's insouciant "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" from Cole Porter's *Leave It to Me* (1938). Other recordings from that same era, especially Clifton Webb's overly formal (rolled "r's" and all) "Easter Parade" from Berlin's *As Thousands Cheer* (1933) and Tamara's thinly sung, emotionless rendering of the haunting "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" from Kern and Otto Harbach's *Roberta* (1933), demonstrate all too clearly that the artist who introduced a song is not necessarily its definitive interpreter.

One curiosity from the 1930s, "Friendship" from Porter's *DuBarry Was a Lady* (1939), was not recorded by stars Ethel Merman and Bert Lahr at the time of the original production. It is preserved here in a riotous Merman and Lahr duet interpolated into a 1954 television adaptation of Porter's 1934 musical, *Anything Goes* (an abbreviated radio performance of "Friendship" by the two stars from the 1930s exists, and is of comparable quality). Bowers makes similar adjustments to include *Of Thee I Sing* (1931) and *Pal Joey* (1940), neither of which were recorded at the time of their original productions, but are represented here by excellent revivals recorded during the early 1950s. Fred Astaire's stage musicals, *Lady Be Good!* (1924), *The Band Wagon* (1931), and *Gay Divorce* (1932), appear in versions recorded in England, where the shows were produced following successful Broadway runs. Oddly, Bowers chooses a track from the 1966 revival of Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), despite the existence of a fine original cast recording that demonstrates star Ethel Merman's voice in its prime.

Beginning with 1940, the recordings are undoubtedly more familiar to even the casual listener, although there are some delightful surprises. Ethel Waters' rapturous rendition of Vernon Duke and Jon Latouche's "Taking a Chance on Love" from *Cabin in the Sky* (1940), Irving Berlin's amusing rendition of his own "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning" from *This is the Army* (1942), Danny Kaye's rambunctious "Tchaikovsky" and Gertrude Lawrence's sly "Jenny" from Weill and Moss Hart's *Lady in the Dark* (1941), Dooley Wilson's joyous "The Eagle and Me" from Harold Arlen and E.V. Harburg's *Bloomer Girl* (1944), and Harold Nicholas and Ruby Hill's sexy "Come Rain or Come Shine" from Arlen and Johnny Mercer's *St. Louis Woman* (1946), offer ample evidence concerning the diversity and quality of even the lesser-known musicals of the era. From more familiar musicals are Ella Logan's moving "How Are Things in Glocca Morra?" from Burton Lane and Harburg's *Finian's Rainbow* (1947), Ray Bolger's perennial "Once in Love With Amy" from Frank Loesser's *Where's Charley* (1948), and Alfred Drake's renditions of "Oklahoma!" from the landmark 1943 musical along with "Where is the Life That Late I Lead?" from Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948). All seem as fresh as ever.

The other musical allotted two cuts is, deservedly and necessarily, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* (1949). Deservedly because it is one of the finest musical theatre scores of its time, and necessarily because the two essential stars, Ezio Pinza and Mary Martin, were given no actual duets. Pinza is represented with the more familiar "Some Enchanted Evening" although his thrilling recording of "This

Nearly Was Mine" would have been a pleasing alternative. Martin's jubilant "A Wonderful Guy" is the best choice from among her songs in the show.

The 1950s and early 1960s offer a decidedly mixed bag, in part because the musical theatre genre was moving into an era of decline. Although Bowers generally selects the appropriate shows, some of his choices of songs and performers are questionable. The selection of the "Runyonland Music/Fugue for Tindhorns/Follow the Fold" medley to represent Lowesser's *Guys and Dolls* (1950) is a disappointment when the title song, or, better still, Vivian Blaine's hilarious "Adelaide's Lament" would have better captured the show's spirit. "Shall We Dance" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* (1951) offers both Gertrude Lawrence and Yul Brynner, although this tinny original cast recording hardly presents the stars at their best. Brynner's "King of Siam" comes off better on later recordings, and Lawrence's "Hello, Young Lovers" would have served the dual purpose of evoking the musical's mood while also offering the listener a chance to hear a mellower Lawrence to compare with her "Someone to Watch Over Me" from Gershwin's *Oh, Kay!* (1926) and "Jenny" from *Lady in the Dark*. Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner's *My Fair Lady* (1956) probably deserved more than one cut. The choice of "The Rain in Spain" over several other songs from the show such as "Why Can't the English," "I Could Have Danced All Night," "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face," or "On the Street Where You Live," merely seems to be a way of hearing the show's two stars, Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews sing together. The inclusion of Kay Ballard's "Lazy Afternoon" from *The Golden Apple* (1954) seems oddly esoteric when more celebrated shows including *Can-Can*, *The Sound of Music*, *Silk Stockings*, *Kismet*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Take Me Along*, *Redhead*, *110 in the Shade*, *Flower Drum Song*, among many others, are overlooked.

As indicated earlier, concluding this set with the musicals of the mid-1960s means that Sondheim, certainly contemporary musical theatre's most significant figure, is represented by only his earliest works as a lyricist, *West Side Story* (1957) *Gypsy* (1959), and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), the latter being the first Broadway production featuring both words and music by Sondheim, but probably his least representative show. The omission of his later works is a serious one, especially since the final side of the collection offers no evidence of his contributions during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Bowers undoubtedly hoped to avoid confronting the musical and thematic challenges to traditional musical comedy posed by Sondheim's later musicals. But his chronicle is missing one of the most significant eras of change, decline, and renewal. Concluding in 1964 also permits Bowers to avoid dealing with the unsettling impact rock music had after the mid-1960s.

But perhaps disappointment is an inevitable reaction to such an anthology for a listener familiar with the modern musical theatre. The great shows are readily available, and it seems there are few undiscovered recordings worthy of inclusion. Recording companies have released similar anthologies of varying lengths, but few have offered as large a sampling as the Smithsonian does here. Two old collections, *This is Broadway's Best* (Columbia, B2WS 1), a two-record gem covering the late 1940s to the late 1950s, and *Show Stoppers* (The Longines Symphonette Society, LS 219 B), a five-record set that covers virtually the same era as Bowers (omitting only the pre-World War I recordings), are considerably more interesting and enjoyable, perhaps because they are not bound by Bower's chronological structure.

American Musical Theatre. Shows, Songs, and Stars is elegantly packaged and technically superb. As mentioned previously, the restoration of the vintage recordings is a major achievement. Happily, this is typical of the entire collection which has been vividly reproduced, in most cases, from master copies. The CD version is flawless and a number of the cuts appear richer and cleaner in this collection than on recently issued CDs of the shows.

Bowers also has compiled an excellent 132-page booklet including a brief history of musical theatre before 1900, as well as detailed notes on each show represented in the collection and biographical material on the performers. This information is presented in a concise and detailed manner, with well-chosen and striking illustrations from the original productions and recording sessions. Especially entertaining are the anecdotes Bowers incorporates about each song and performer.

Without a doubt, this collection will be of great interest to anyone looking for an introductory survey of American musical theatre during the first half of the twentieth century. The true connoisseur may have to look elsewhere. *Reviewed by James Fisher* 