

attention by the reissue companies in the last decades. This release should do much to re-establish her as the singer of stature that she was.

As an interesting appendix, Romophone has included the spoken commentary on her recordings which Eames gave in a radio interview in 1939. Indexing information is supplied so that one can return to the recording being discussed. This appendix is most suitable for multi-disc players.

Emmy Destinn: Czech soprano Emmy Destinn (1878-1930) was one of the most widely acclaimed artists of her time. The public, critics, composers and her colleagues were equal in the adulation. Puccini created *Fanciulla del West's* heroine, Minnie, for Destinn after hearing her as Butterfly. Often paired with Caruso, she was regarded as the finest dramatic voice and actress of her era. Early training as a violinist enabled Destinn to learn roles quickly. She had a phenomenal memory and covered an enormous repertoire. Her recordings number some 213, of which these Victors were the last made. Critical opinion of her recordings has always been less than enthusiastic. The sheer size of her instrument did not take well to the primitive recording techniques of the time. Indeed, present day technology still cannot do full justice to really big voices. The faultless technique, secure intonation and thrilling delivery reported unanimously by her contemporaries are denied us. These recordings demonstrate a large warm voice, especially generous at the top, which occasionally strays from pitch. Her phrasing is four square and lacks subtlety. Few phrases stick in the memory. If we use these recordings to judge her, then the reputation she earned seems somewhat unjustified, although the beauty of her voice cannot be denied.

This edition contains 37 tracks including opera arias, art songs and a number of Czech songs (including some of Destinn's own). Four of the Czech songs are duets with Destinn's lover at the time, Dinh Gilly.

Ultraphone, a Supraphon subsidiary, has issued a single, mid-priced CD of 20 tracks (Ultraphone 11 1337-2 601). This disc contains some duplication of materials with interesting differences for comparison. The *Aida* "O patria mia" (both Victor 88469) on Ultraphone appears to have been from a less worn copy than Romophone's version. The sound on the Ultraphone is cleaner and far more listenable. However, the *Mignon* "Kennst du das Land" (both Victor 88467) demonstrates the value of Mr. Marston's thorough research into pitch and speed variables. The Ultraphone version, pitched a good step lower than Romophone's recording results in a leaden affair doing little to enhance Destinn's reputation. "Kennst du das Land" is hardly a happy aria, but at dirge tempo its effect is lugubrious. Ultraphone has announced a 16 CD set of Destinn's complete recordings for 1994. This will include a complete *Faust*, *Carmen* and *Lohengrin* Act 3.

Destinn was an important artistic force in her time but she has not translated well to our age. This collection is a welcome addition in that so few of her recordings have been released.

Claudia Muzio: Countless reissues on LP and CD of Italian soprano Claudia Muzio (1889-1936) have kept her name familiar and the wonder of her singing always available. The better known selection of electrical recordings made for Italian Columbia in the early 1930s demonstrate a more mature artistry but also document the soprano's failing health and vocal powers. The Edison Diamond Discs have long been treasured as the best representation of this voice at its peak despite some reservations about Edison's reorchestration ideas for the accompaniments. (The "complete HMV" consists