

of only two tracks, a "Si, mi chiamano Mimi" and "Amami Alfredo").

Columbia issued two LPs of this material in the 1970s. Listening to them was a revelation of just how much improvement Mr. Marston's restorations have made. The voice, once so distant, is now forward and bright. The flashes of humor and depths of pathos that characterize Muzio's work have never been more apparent. The two-CD issue of *The Published Edisons* on Cantabile (BIM-705-2) also suffers in comparison with this release. The distortions and fading in and out of sound that plague that issue have been eliminated on Romophone's release. This is a truly outstanding job of technology aiding art.

The emotional intensity of Muzio's singing is its hallmark. Listen to the *La Wally* aria or "Pace, pace, mio Dio." No wonder she was called the "Duse of song". Her voice was a *verismo* instrument by training but capable of *bel canto* style. The purity of her "Lascia ch'io piango" has long been praised. The exaltation she brings to the climaxes of *verismo* arias is pure exhilaration for the listener. This issue is highly recommended for its technical excellence and content. *Reviewed by Howard Kennett.*

Endnote

Romophone's issues are not readily available in the US. The company's address is: Romophone, PO Box 450, London SW17 0XR, England. The fax number is 44 (81) 682-0965.

Treasures from the Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings Two CD set (no catalog number given on discs or package)

The Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings at Yale University Library is one of the outstanding collections of early vocal recordings in the world. The generous patronage of Mr. and Mrs. Laurence C. Witten II founded the collection and continuous support from them, along with individual and corporate donors, has built the collection to what it is. A selective acquisitions policy focusing on certain areas of sound recording history has governed the nature of the collection. It is not limited to vocal music but includes jazz, instrumental music, drama, theatre, and public speaking.

The forty-nine classical vocal recordings in this release were chosen for their rarity and interest. The collection is divided into seven segments representing the national schools which prevailed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The seven segments are: American and English singers, French singers, German and Austrian singers, Scandanavian singers, East European singers, Russian singers, and Italian singers.

The Yale collection's criterion for inclusion in the collection include creators of the roles recorded, singers strongly identified with a particular role, and singers of music new at the time of its recording. Rejected for inclusion were singers and repertory that have been released elsewhere. To say that this collection is un-hackneyed is understatement. Most, but not all, of the artists rate a mention in Michael Scott's *The Record of Singing*. The famous rub shoulders with the virtually unknown. Recording quality varies from mostly excellent to rather gritty and dim. This is definitely not a collection for the uninitiated. Disc to tape transfer was accomplished at Yale and the tapes sent to Richard C. Burns at Packburn Electronics, Inc. for filtering. For those who desire the sound free of processing, "application to purchase the tapes" information is provided in the liner notes. Full discographic information about the originals

plus thumbnail biographies of the singers are provided as well. No vocal texts are included. Given the care with which discographic information is provided, it seems odd that the CDs themselves have no numbering beyond CD1 and CD2. Is this release intended as a one-time event? We should hope that Yale will continue to make their rare materials available on further releases.

Undoubtedly, the supreme treasure is Lilli Lehmann's recording of the "Liebestod". To hear one of the first great Wagner sopranos in one of her greatest roles is a real privilege. Unreleased because it was too long to fit on a 78 side and for reported distortion at the end (conveniently modified by Mr. Burns, we presume), this is its first public release. Yale's opinion that it is one of the great lyric outpourings seems fully justified.

The remaining forty-seven singers are consistently fascinating. Lehmann alone gets two tracks, "Du bist der Lenz" and the "Liebestod", although Pelagie Greeg-Andriessen has two tries at "Ho-jo-to-ho" on one track. Muratore, Clement, Destinn (electrifying in Leoncavallo's "Roland von Berlin"), Litvinne, Caruso, and Tamagno are represented. The remaining tracks are from those names one sees but rarely encounters in sound. This reviewer was initially daunted by the variable quality of the recordings. Repeated hearings increased interest and appreciation for the invaluable materials provided so generously.

Do not apply to Yale for purchase. *Reviewed by Howard Kennett.*

Endnote

This recording is available only from: Nipper, PO Box 4, Woodstock, NY 12498-0004. Telephone: (914) 679-6982 Fax: (914) 679-6904, Price: \$39.50 + \$3.50 shipping

Hawaiian Steel Guitar Classics 1927-1938, Arhoolie 7027

The Hawaiian steel guitar, like the Pidgin language spoken by its most accomplished practitioners, is a prime example of twentieth century cross-cultural hybridization. Brought to Hawaii by Hispanic immigrants in the late nineteenth century (and still used within those communities, as is well-documented on the Smithsonian collection "Puerto Rican Music in Hawaii"), it quickly found its way into the rapidly burgeoning, cosmopolitan Hawaiian mainstream. Retuned to major or minor triads (the so-called "slack-key" tuning), positioned on the lap and played with a slide, it soon became the representative sound of the islands, along with its similarly imported cousin, the ukulele. In addition to considerable state-side popularity of the genre in the 1920s and 30s, the innovative slide style had a profound impact on a number of different genres, from bottleneck blues playing in the Mississippi delta to Nashville pedal-steel practice. Most miraculously, Nigerian juju musicians in the 1960s became enamored of the sound, and incorporated it into their ensembles; it is now an inextricable element in the music of King Sunny Ade, for example.

Despite this impact, which was largely a hidden one, and again like Pidgin, it is a rhetoric that until recently got little to no respect. The style has been the subject of more ridicule than anything else, conjuring images of "Tiny Bubbles" and umbrella-laden drinks. Despite its distinctive place as a uniquely American genre, the style has been too closely associated with sultry tropical caricatures, nonsense lyrics, and Don Ho in order to take its rightful place alongside other regional styles.