MISCELLANEOUS

First of all let me thank all those readers who took the time to write to me or to the Editor to express confidence in my modest efforts. What I said last month was intended as a fishing, not for compliments, but for a vote of confidence; and this I may fairly claim to have received. I shall continue my passage through the jungle with greater courage.

At this time of year one is especially on the look out for records which will please summer visitors and will float out on the evening air without displacing the neighbours. Pre-eminently suitable are the Chanson Hindou (tirelessly labelled "Song of India") and Sleeping Beauty (walts of Tchaikovsky's), played by the Cleveland Orchestra under Sokoloff on Brunswick 16120 (10in., 3s. 6d.); the Maldivian from Théo and Thémè's Simple Aces, played by the Dajou Bela Trio (Parlo. E.10580, 12 in., 4s. 6d.); and Weniawski's arrangement of a Passet Fantasia (Parlo. E.10579, 12 in., 4s. 6d.), played by the Edith Lorand Orchestra with fine scope for Miss Lorand's own delightful playing. Of cheaper 10in. records note the gypsy tunes of the Colodhan String Quintet on Actuelle 1360 (2s. 6d.); the genuine thing, but not so impressive as the A and P Gypsy (Brunswick 3394, 3s.), a larger combination, in two less Remany tunes (though Prasquita undeniably suits their style). Even De Groot and his Piccadilly Orchestra cannot add much freshness to Shepherd of the Hills and In a little Spanish town (H.M.V. 82437, 3s.); but to the Desert Song and Esotehpe Marching Song (H.M.V. 82747, 3s.) the past is not nearly so easily eaten; and the same applies to the J. H. Squire Celetce Octet in Gounod's Serenade and Garino's Estease (Col. 3832, 3s.). Louis Garino's little orchestra at Monte Carlo introduced me to the charms of light music fittingly played fifteen years ago, and against his own Estease in a programme still preserved I had scribbled in pencil, "What a droll idea of ecstasy!"

"The Desert Song" at the Drury Lane Theatre has been recorded pretty thoroughly, in the theatre itself by Columbia, and in the studio by H.M.V. I can't pretend to like the music very much, nor the voices of Miss Edith Day (Col.) or Miss Kathleen Hilliard; but the immense gusto of the performances and the brilliance of the recording, especially Columbia's, do prevent tedium. George Baker may be the most versatile of gramophone artists, as he claims to be, but even with his fine voice and recording experience he seems to me to be beaten out of court by Harry Welman and Gene Garrard, whose songs he sings for H.M.V. Everybody who is interested in such things has probably heard, chosen and bought what he wants already, and I wonder whether he will agree with me that on the whole "Vocal Gems" on one side and Billy Mayerl's Piano Medley on the other is the most desirable of the selections, and Columbia 4389 (10in., 3s.) with men singing Eastern and Western Love on the one hand and a chorus of girls singing It on the other, the most desirable of the others. But it is largely a matter of titles, and there is not anything really to be said against any of the records of Desert Song. There is, by the way, a 10in. Selection which has merits on Zono. 2924 (2s. 6d.) and on Regal G.8853 (2s. 6d.).

The vocal gems of "Desert Song" on H.M.V. C.1331 are backed by those of The Blue Mazurkas, by the Light Opera Company, which also gives us Lady Luck and The Vagabond King on C. 1346—all loud, spirited and effective to a high degree. A Lady Luck Selection—I dealt with the Columbia records of this music last month—is done by the Savoy Orpheans on H.M.V. C.1341; and the first Blue Train Selection that I have heard is by Percival Mackey's Band (Col. 9213), rather hurriedly recorded, I should guess. All these are 12in. and cost 4s. 6d. For 4s. you can get the vocal gems of the Yeomen of the Guard on Zono. A.321, with some clear, straight-singing that is adequate but rather crude: and a Queen High Selection on Velvet Face 709, where some of the life has gone out of the charming tunes. For half a crown you can get selections from Castle in the Air (Regal G.8854) and Lady Luck (Regal 8868). It needed Ed. Lowry's two 10in. records from Whitebirds to rouse me from the vocal gospel trance into which I had fallen—dreaming that the Blue Train was thundering over me, each coach labelled differently, but pouring past and bearing all before them as the last—and Ed. Lowry accompanied by the Gilt-Edged Four is something to break the monotony. Yes, Sir. Try these songs, Whitebirds—Da Da Da and I've got a wonderful girl (Col. 4396, 3s.), and The Olner Twist and Everyone is trying the Charleston now (Col. 4391, 3s.). They will set your corpules dancing.

Of the pipe organ records I recommend Reginald Foort (H.M.V. B.2463, 3s.) in the Desert Song and Riff Song; Jack Courray in Shallmar and Forgive me (Col. 4373, 3s.) and Jesse Crawford spreading his chords (or whatever his peculiar effect is called) more than ever in Blue Skies and Falling in love with you (H.M.V. B.2460, 3s.), while on the grand organ, the accomplished accompaniments of H. H. Wellesley are to be found in Schubert's Serenade and the Intermezzi from Cavalleria Rusticana (Zono. 2926, 2s. 6d.).

Eileen Andjelevich makes violin solos, rather strident but smartly played, with Billy Desmond to sing the refrain of Nina's and Beautiful Evening (Acco. G.1906, 2s. 6d.), and the same sturdiness in recording masts for me the banjo and guitar solos of that virtuoso, Mario de Pietro (Acco. G.16205, 2s. 6d.), so that I much prefer Len Fillian who, with Syd Bright at the piano, makes very striking recordings of Sort of Uncertain (banjo) and My Rose (Hawaiian guitar) on Col. 4385 (3s.), and of Because I love you (Hawaiian steel guitar) and Meadow Lark (guitar) on Col. 4372 (3s.). The syncopated piano solo surely need not be so wooden as that of Ken Edwards on Vee. X.9996 (3s.), as is shown by Tony Lowry playing Only a rose with his usual charm and Rudolf Friml giving us his own Song of the Wagons on Col. 4377 (3s.).

I dare not advise all and sundry to rush out and buy two remarkable records issued by Parlophone; but everyone who takes the slightest interest in American "hot" playing must get Joe Venuti, prince of jazz violinists, in Wild Cat and Sun- down (Parlo. R. 3330, 3s.) and Boyd Bennett, no stranger to the gramophone, in two clarinet solos, Clarinet Tickle and Bluen' the Blues (Parlo. R.3329, 3s.). In both records Ed. Lang plays the guitar, a master of his art; and outrageous, impudent, insufferable as their performances may seem to some ears, there is no question but that all are craftsmen of the highest rank in their profession. They make quiet record of Bef- stowe and You're the one and only on Actuelle 11374 (2s. 6d.).

Oh, I heard a fair good memory original A Sister to Assist er is put on two sides of a 10in. record by Joan and Doris Emney (Zono. 2931, 2s. 6d.) without displacing H.M.V. G. 492; and Billy Bennett, whose House records well, is himself in No Poses on North and The Charge of the Light Brigade on Col. 9205 (12in., 4s. 6d.). An expensive record.

There remain forty-seven records in my pile to be considered.

My feeling last month that Zonophone have got a cinch in Florence Oldham and her accompanist is increased this month. She sings with a great deal of the quiet humour It takes a good man to do that and It takes a good woman to keep a good man at home—a nice pair of titles (Zono. 2925, 2s. 6d.). Annette Hanshaw, too, charms by her quietness, and even gives a freshness to Chérie, je t'aime (Chérie, listen again is a formable rhyme) and Calling me home (Actuelle 11361, 2s. 6d.). The accompaniments are pleasing, better than in her Ain't she sweet? and It all depends on you (Actuelle 11388, 2s. 6d.). Dorrie Deno, on the other hand, is boisterous and "indescribable" in Marmaduke and Sing Hallelujah (Voc. X.10067, 3s.), and carries it off well; but Vaughn de Leath and party in the old kind of laughing record (Acco. G.16210, 2s. 6d.) is a complete failure. Of the men, Norman Long is the typical entertainer (H.M.V., B.2454, 3s.), Leslie Sarony is slick and distinct in poorish songs and patter (H.M.V., B.2472, 3s.), and Jay

Printed from Gramophone - July 1927 at exacteditions.com. Copyright © 2020