

July 21

Several regular Midlands members gathered at Bill Dean-Myatt's house for a presentation by our Group chairman Eddie Dunn, **More Basses and Baritones**. This was a sequel to the programme Eddie gave in March 2017. This time there were some less well known singers, starting with a 1925 record of the prologue from *Pagliacci*, sung by Apollo Granforte and issued on a pink labelled Mondial disc, pressed in Italy.

Then came a 1928 brown labelled German Parlophon record of 'Zaza Piccola Zingara' from Leoncavallo's *Zaza* sung by the relatively obscure Italian baritone Fausto Ricci who died in 1964. Eddie then took us back to 1911 with a purpled labelled Favorite of the Serenade from Act 3 of Gounod's *Faust* sung by the now largely forgotten French bass Paul Aumonier. Aumonier, who died in May 1944, was a pioneer recording artist who had first recorded on cylinder for Pathé.

In 1892 Rudyard Kipling published his *Barrack Room Ballads* including 'Fuzzy Wuzzy' which was set to music, and recorded in the mid-1940s for RCA Victor by the New York Metropolitan bass-baritone Norman Cordon. He was born in Washington N.C. in 1904 and died from a heart attack in 1964. Another New York Met performer was the Italian born bass Tancredi Pasero who performed there from 1929 until 1933 but he had sung at La Scala in 1926. From this earlier period Eddie played a 1927 Fonotipia of 'Vecchia Zimarra' from Puccini's *La Boheme*.

Eddie's programme continued with another Parlophon disc, a 1906 record of 'Pari Siamo' from *Rigoletto* sung by the baritone Giovanni Albinolo. In total contrast was a Canadian Victor pressing of *Cyfri'r Geifr*, a traditional Welsh song with harp accompaniment by the Welsh born concert baritone Thomas L. Thomas. This dated from about 1950 and was recorded about forty-five years later than the next, a pink label Russian G&T from 1907 of Titta Ruffo singing 'Spettro Santa' from the French opera *Amleto* (Hamlet) by Ambroise Thomas.

The final part of his presentation included a blue labelled Spanish Regal recording of the fine operatic bass José Mardones singing 'Infelice' from Verdi's *Ermani*. This was followed by an amusing Canadian HMV-Victor, recorded in November 1933 in New York by the Canadian baritone John Charles Thomas performing 'The Green Eyed Dragon'. Eddie's penultimate disc was a red seal Victrola disc from 1927. The singer was the Italian bass Ezio Pinza who was heard performing 'Cavatine' from the early nineteenth century French opera *La Juive*. Eddie told us that Pinza, who sang at the New York Met and Covent Garden, had a second career in musical theatre. Eddie finished with a CBS LP from 1971 of the German bass Ivan Rebroff singing the Russian folk song 'Die Legende von den 12 Räubern' (The Legend of the Twelve Robbers). Eddie told us that Rebroff was noted for his tremendous vocal range which was an incredible four and a half octaves!

Our thanks to Eddie for his entertaining selection and also to Bill for his hospitality and light refreshments.

Phil Bennett