

We were pleased to welcome Society Director and chairman of the London Meetings, Robert Girling to this meeting when Norman Field entertained us with a carefully crafted programme on c.d. which he called *Orchestral Oddities* and while every item played was not strictly orchestral it may be said that that a few were to some extent a little bit odd!

His first selection was the "Prelude" to Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* on a 14" centre start Pathe from c. 1912 one of a 32 disc set from the so called complete opera recordings issued by Pathe.

Nicole Records were the first discs to be recorded and pressed in the UK. Norman had purchased an early example which dated from c.1903. The performer on the record was Pete Hampton an early black recording artist singing "Any Rags",

This was followed by an example on the obscure Great Scott record label. This was a short lived mid 1930s recording company which operated in a rural location near Perth.

To demonstrate good quality cylinder recording we heard an extract from a 1914 Edison Blue Amberol of what appeared to be a scripture lesson! A second Blue Amberol followed, a selection from the musical "Old Dutch". Norman told us that this cylinder was originally issued on a wax amberol in 1910.

Norman is a collector of 1920s jazz and he included a 1928 Brunswick recording of "There'll Be Some Changes Made" by the Chicago Rhythm Kings. This recording really swings, due, in part, to the presence of cornettist Muggsy Spanier and nineteen year old Gene Krupa on drums.

After a break Norman continued his oddities with a recording by pianist Billy Mayerl – a tutorial in the art of "Modern Rhythmic Playing" one of a series of discs that Mayerl recorded from the late 1920s onwards. Another *novelty* style pianist was the little known English musician Henry Melland whose 1928 Parlophone recording of "Missing Every Note" followed.

We then heard a Columbia recording of the Italian soprano Maria Farneti singing "Un Bel Di Vedremo" from Act 2 of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. It would appear that Farneti recorded this in 1931 although she officially retired from the operatic stage in 1917.

Paul Whiteman's Orchestra made the occasional foray into semi-classical works as Norman demonstrated to us by playing Part One of George Gershwin's "Concerto in F" that recorded for Columbia in 1928.

Norman brought his programme to a close with three totally different recordings, the first was part of a speech by Horatio Bottomley M.P. on a 1915 Bulldog recording..

Norman's penultimate recording was a superb hot jazz disc on Brunswick entitled "Dog Bottom". Recorded for Brunswick in 1929 by the Chick Webb Orchestra, it was issued under the pseudonym of "The Jungle Band" What a corking good record this is

So ended an evening of a very varied and in many cases unusual recordings, our thanks to Norman for his interesting compilation.