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NEW RECORDINGS

Spotlight on Australia

By OWEN JENSEN

THE performer's path to musical fame is paved, these days, with long-playing recordings. That is his quickest and most certain way of building his reputation.

At a recent convention of New Zealand composers in Wellington, the Australasian Performing Right Association, under whose auspices the convention was held, pledged its support for the New Zealand composer, among other things, in opening up channels for the recording of his music. What this may mean is shown by a new batch of records featuring Australian musicians.

Put out under the label *Spotlight*, these long-playing discs originate from Melbourne. In every way, they are a credit to Australian enterprise. The fidelity is really hi-fi, the artists featured do a commendable job of work, the programmes, although generally on the popular "light classical" side, are admirably chosen.

Most ambitious is an organ recital by Dr A. E. Floyd on the organ of the Melbourne Town Hall (Spotlight SC 1002). The programme comprises Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, the overture from Handel's *Othello*, and small pieces by Wesley, Schumann and Purcell, all played attractively and, as noted above, recorded well.

Virginia Paris (contralto)—remember her as Bloody Mary in *South Pacific*?—sings a programme of well-known Negro spirituals and some Stephen Foster songs. Miss Paris has both the voice and the temperament to make this a most listenable disc. The orchestral arrangements by William Flynn are, however, a little too sophisticated for my taste (Spotlight SC 1008).

Then there's the Australian Boys' Choir conducted by Vincent Kelly singing "Eriskany Love Lilt," "Waltzing Matilda," "Skye Boat Song," "Bobby Shaftoe," etc. (Spotlight SC 1007). The Australian Boys' Choir seems to lack the exuberant vitality of some better-known boys' choirs that have come this

way, but all the same they turn on some very pleasant, musically singing. Their tone quality is admirable, and they sing more consistently in tune than most.

In the line of hymn singing, the Ballarat City Choir conducted by W. H. Keith Young also produce a most agreeable sound, even if their interpretation of a number of favourites inclines to the sentimental (Spotlight SC 1009). Some more fine singing comes from the choir of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, in a bunch of carols (Spotlight SC 1001).

All this choir singing compares favourably with similar music from farther afield, but somehow or other it seems to lack that rhythmic drive that one would expect from the Australian temperament.

Don't be put off by the titles of two programmes by the pianist Nancy Weir. They're not quite as sentimental as they sound, and the playing is most satisfying. "Liebestraum" (Spotlight SC 1010) and "Spring Song" (SC 1006) both present what are often called "encore numbers"—Spring Song, Fantasie Impromptu, Schumann's Dedication, the Beethoven Moonlight Sonata (first movement only), etc.—but they are played with a straightforward spontaneity that brings them off freshly.

A Little Jazz

Roy Eldridge and Dizzy Gillespie can always be depended upon to turn out a bit of spirited playing. Together (Clef MGC 641) they may not be twice as hot but they vie with each other in nimbleness of fingers and wit to produce some very interesting playing. The same sort of quick-witted improvisation gives character to the piano work of George Wallington (with bass and drums) (Esquire 20-076).

Talking about jazz on the piano, if you are wishing to bone up on this sort of thing you couldn't do better than listen to two discs of Barrel House and Boogie Woogie (Brunswick B 12-1230 and 12-1271), featuring such well-known old-timers as Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Mary Lou Williams, Pine Top Smith and some more obscure doughties of the classic days of jazz. Harking back



NANCY WEIR
Straightforward spontaneity

to the earlier days, too, is the playing of George Lewis's New Orleans Ragtime Band (Esquire 20-073), honky-tonk enough to recapture the genuine New Orleans flavour.

Back to swing with James Moody's *Moods* (Esquire 20-077). James Moody and his boys don't need to go very far to town to produce the real roll of swing, whether it be in "A Hundred Years from Today," "Over the Rainbow," or "Mambo with Moody." In the way of swing, the Modern Jazz Quartet still produce some of the most imaginative playing, although for my part the vibraphones of Milt Jackson begin to cloy by the time we arrive at the second side of the disc. You can hear some more of the Modern Jazz Quartet in *Concorde* (Esquire 20-069), with the title piece and "Softly as in the Morning Sunrise" as two of the best numbers, and in a further programme (Esquire 20-038), which includes "Django," "Milano" and "La Ronde."

Coda

Some singing to be recommended is by the Brazilian soprano Olga Coelho—she toured New Zealand in 1939, giving broadcast recitals—with guitar (Esquire 15-006). Olga Coelho sings Spanish and Latin American songs, alternatively nostalgic and exuberant, but always with the authentic atmosphere.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY SPORTS BROADCASTS

ON Monday, June 3, when New Zealand celebrates the Queen's Birthday, winter sport starts off in earnest. Nearly a dozen major Rugby games are scheduled to be played, one inter-provincial Soccer game, and also in the outdoors the horses will be running in the second day of five race meetings, the Otago Hurdles and the Great Northern Steeplechase being the highlights of the day. Monday will also see the final day's play in the New Zealand Indoor Bowls Championships at Invercargill.

Commentaries on the race meetings will be broadcast as follows: Wanganui J.C. (2XA), Napier Park R.C. (2YZ), Dunedin J.C. (4YA), Auckland R.C. (1YA), Wellington T.C. (2YA). Each of the two big races for the day will be broadcast on YA-YZ link, and the commentary on the Great Northern Steeplechase will be repeated in the 7.0 link the same evening. The approximate times for the broadcast commentaries are: Otago Hurdles, 11.58 a.m.; Great Northern Steeplechase, 12.35 p.m.

Commentaries on nine Rugby matches will be heard at the following times: 10.15 a.m., Wanganui A v. Taranaki A (2XA); 2.30 p.m., Waikato v. Auckland (1YA); 2.30, Counties v. North Auckland (1XN); 2.45, Canterbury XV v. Mid-Canterbury (3YA); 2.45, Canterbury v. West Coast (3YZ); 3.0, Wanganui B v. Taranaki B (2XP); 3.0, Wellington v. Manawatu (2ZA); 3.15, Hawke's Bay v. Wairarapa (2YZ); 2.45, Poverty Bay v. East Coast (2XG).

The results of the Middlesex Cup seven-a-side tournament at Taumarunui, and a Wellington XV v. Marlborough game will be broadcast in the National Sports Summary at 7.0 p.m.

Also in the National Sports Summary will be the result of the Soccer game, Canterbury v. Otago, at Christchurch, and a three-minute report on the Indoor Bowls Championships. Results of the evening finals in the Bowls will be heard from YAs and YZs at 11.14 p.m.

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