

With GRAMOPHONE and RADIO

By "B NATURAL"

The Motor and the Turntable.

THE turntable will receive consideration first for it is nearer the surface and its defects are the more obvious. Strictly speaking, the majority of turntables do not preserve a perfectly true running plane. The plane is not a true horizontal one, and if the eye is lowered to the level of the turntable so that the revolutions of the latter can be viewed edge on, or if, for more accurate measurements, a simple cardboard gauge be made and placed against the turntable, it will be seen that there is a slight periodic sway in the turntable as it revolves at normal speeds. The consequence is that unequal pressure between needle and record is liable to be set up, and a certain amount of record wear created.

Sometimes, however, a badly running turntable can be made to revolve more truly by the simple expedient of attending to the spacing washers on the bolts which hold the motor to the motor board.

OCCASIONALLY the baize or whatever material the turntable is covered with comes loose at the edges, especially if the machine has been kept for a long time in a damp atmosphere. Now, baize which has even slightly become loosened at the edges should be stuck down immediately with a little hot glue solution, because in such a condition the turntable baize will present inequalities of surface and so will interfere with the correct playing of the record.

The tendency of modern gramophone design is to lighten weight wherever possible, and in some of the portable instruments which may be equipped for electrical playing the turntable may be on the light side. In such a case there may be a slight flattening of pitch on loud notes, due to the inability of the turntable to carry the record over these notes at constant speed.

The Rubber Mat.

AN excellent remedy for light turntables is a rubber pad (obtainable from most gramophone and radio-gramophone specialists) placed over the turntable. This acts as a non-skid device for the record, and used on a light turntable, or one of small diameter, it will enable the loudest record to be played without detriment to tonal quality.

The rubber turntable mat has other virtues as well. It insulates the record from the turntable, and so damps any extrinsic vibrations which may reach the record from below. It helps to reduce surface noise and pick-up chatter when it occurs is less noticeable, a valuable feature in a great many cases.

The Gramophone Motor.

BY FAR the most important consideration as far as the motor is concerned is the speed for pitch, an important determinative of quality is governed by it. There is, however, in this subject enough matter to make a separate article and for this it will be left for the present.

One can do little to the mechanics of the gramophone motor, its functioning is extremely complicated and repairs and adjustments must be left to a skilled tradesman. With the electric motor, there is very little that can go wrong. It will function happily for years if carefully oiled and dusted. Every now and again the turntable should be lifted off and the bearings cleaned and oiled. The turntable in the majority of cases will lift off the motor spindle by giving it a steady upward pull. It is advisable to keep the thumb on the top of the spindle to prevent the weight of the pull being transferred to the motor, where it might do damage.

Having lifted off the turntable, clean the various moving parts and oil them with very fine machine oil. With the electric motor the points to be oiled are fewer. They are, the spindle, the bearings and the brake mechanism. If an electric cut-off is used, do not oil any part of the contacts, otherwise the oil will prevent a good contact and the running of the motor will be erratic.

Careful oiling and cleanliness will do much in making for reliability of the motor, while it must not be forgotten that even and silent running are essential to really good gramophone reproduction.

Celebrities

Chopin, the Lonely Exile

PADEREWSKI has said of Chopin that he was the priest who carried to the scattered Poles the sacrament of nationalism. This fine image vividly recalls the revolution of 1830; the last despairing effort of Poland to rid herself of Russian suzerainty. Chopin, a boy of twenty, had left Poland only a few weeks before the revolution broke out. He was alone in an unfriendly city, hungering for news of his home, which came only at long intervals; a prey to fears which only a torturing imagination could raise. He wandered from Vienna to Munich, from Munich to Stuttgart, where on September 8, 1831, he heard of the collapse of the revolution and the capture of Warsaw by the Russians.

From that day one must think of him always as the exile, bearing in his heart a permanent wound, the tragedy of his people. Their songs, their dances—and in Poland the very ballads of the country are dances—became the warp and woof of his music. She is the land of the dance—polonaise, krakowiak, mazurka—and the rhythm of Polish dance sounds through nearly the whole of his work.

When he left home, he had a presentiment that he would never return. His friends gave him a silver cup filled with Polish earth. This he kept by him all his life. It was this earth that, when he died, they scattered on his coffin at Pere Lachaise. It was all that remained of Poland, save in his music; those "few score pages in which," as has been beautifully said, "were to burn for three-quarters of a century the mysticism of a nation."

The appearance of Chopin made beautiful images in the minds of those who were his friends. To Schumann, before ever they met one another, the printed page of his music, the very notes, seemed as marvellous eyes regarding him. To Liszt he was "a convolvulus, balancing its azure-hued cup on a very slight stem"; to Georges Sand "an angel, fair of face as a tall, sad woman." It is not difficult to picture him; the frail figure, exquisitely dressed; the long hair, very fair and soft, framing a face which was ashen-pale, and of which every feature betrayed an intense sensitiveness; the huge brown eyes that burned with the fires of consumption.

He was wholly urban; the child of the salon and shaded candle-light. . . . Life, surrounding him with comfort, shielding him from the sordid, and from life's pettier cares, but that he might be free to receive her deeper wounds. There was nothing upon which his heart fastened that did not bring him sorrow. Many pages of his music stand for tragedies of the heart at which we dare not look save in the mirror of waltz, prelude, or ballade. The G Minor Ballade: We little remember in what fires of suffering this music was forged. It was his requiem to the dead love of Marie Wodzinska, whose letters and the rose she gave him were found after his death in a packet upon which he had written "Moja Bieda": my grief.

His piano was his only confidant. He used it, said Liszt, to play to himself his own tragedy. In Paris, in some drawingroom, where his intimate friends were gathered, and, above all, his fellow-exiles, he would take some familiar rhythm of the Fatherland, whisper it first, then utter it more boldly, then toss it about in wild abandon, till the great plains, the great forests of Poland rose before eyes set in a

IN discussing quality, the fashionable topic of conversation to-day, the usual line of talk is the amplifier, the pick-up and the record—important aspects, certainly, but not the only ones entering into the question. The turntable and the motor both greatly effect the quality of the reproduction and it is our purpose in this week's article to attack the question of quality from this point of view, that even the most untechnical listener might look to to the betterment of reproducer and reproduction alike. Our article this week is written especially for these listeners.

trance of memory. Often these improvisations furnished the germ of music we know. When the tragic news of the capture of Warsaw reached him, he turned to his piano, and in a passion of overwhelming grief poured out a torrent of improvisation which was later to become the "Etude in C Minor," the "Revolutionary." The "Sixth Prelude" was the child of a hideous hour of fear in the deserted Charterhouse of Valdemosa, while the storm beat piteously on the roof, and Chopin left alone for the day had imagined his friend to be dead and himself to be dead, too, and was found, when his friend returned, playing the music like one in a dream, and cried out: "Ah, I knew that you were dead!" But then the music went through a veritable crucible before it was given to the world. Flaubert is said to have spent an entire day over the polishing of a single sentence: Chopin spent weeks, behind locked doors, working at each phrase and bar, in an agony of choice, under an imperious need for absolute perfection.

He had settled in Paris amid the last thunder of the revolution that set Louis Philippe upon the throne; he was driven from Paris in 1848 by the first that heralded the Second Republic. He came to England. The beautiful friendship with Georges Sand was broken, never to mend, and the power of composition was gone; he was already a dying man. He gave concerts—a thing he hated—because he would send no more of his manuscripts to the publisher; he had no longer the strength to labour at them, and he would buy nothing at the price of work he could not pass. In the following May he burnt them.

He was received everywhere. He was introduced to such oddly different persons as the old Duke of Wellington and Dickens. Throughout his stay he was the guest of one or other of the great houses.

All the time an intolerable nostalgia turned his thoughts to Paris. He went back in the spring of 1849. Again life took thought for him and brought him the friends who saw that he should not want. For now he was penniless. Those who watched at his bedside were almost all his fellow-countrymen: the Abbe Jelowski, the friend of his childhood, who gave him the Last Sacraments; Princess Czartoryska, who nursed him; and the beautiful Countess Potocka, whose voice singing to him was the last music he heard, a few hours before he died.

Almost his final word was to Franchomme, the violoncellist, "Play Mozart in memory of me." Among many epitaphs, the most beautiful was perhaps that of Schumann, who wrote: "The soul of music has passed over the world."