

Interlude on the Gramophone

Jerusalem — Where Buying a Record is Still an Adventure

AN AMUSING SKETCH BY DOROTHY KAHN

DAY by day Palestine is acquiring the amenities of modern life with lightning speed. Where there were tin curling irons a year ago, a few mysterious and complicated permanent waving machines have now appeared. Yet we can be grateful for the few lacks there still are because when they disappear we will, like the rest of the world, have to depend largely on the comic strips for our laughs.

So three cheers because our music stores have no glass booths! Buying gramophone records in a shop equipped with these sound-proof booths is most efficient, but hardly an adventure. You simply retire into the privacy of a booth; sink into a comfortable chair; and proceed undisturbed to puff on your pipe, cigar or cigarette while listening to the records of your choice. In peace, at your leisure, and with precision, you decide upon the selections that you should like to add to your music album. If you make a mistake, you have no one to blame but yourself.

Someone in the next booth may be making a similar selection but he simply resembles a silent cinema. You can only judge that he is playing a Bach concerto by the soulful mist in his eye; or that he is playing "I want pan pancakes" by the way he sways his shoulders.

BUYING a record in Jerusalem is a more exciting, more hazardous and more haphazard undertaking. And if you come home with "Horses, Horses, Horses" when what you really had your heart set on was "The Lost Chord," you may have a lot of people to blame besides yourself.

The communal spirit pervades. Three or four customers are in one small room, each standing before a gramophone, record in hand, and a war-like glint in the eye. The object of the glare is blissfully unconscious. She is draped over the counter listening to George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." It is being played by an organist and what she really wanted was Paul Whiteman's orchestra. But this is good; so good, in fact, that she is transported and has already played both sides twice. Everyone hopes that on the third round she will reach a decision, and play it the fourth and fifth times at home.

Two dapper American youths flounce in and want to hear all the latest selections from "Gold Diggers 1935." The German woman with the thick glasses who is clutching selections from Wagner's "Siegfried" clicks her tongue against her teeth as yards of "That Forgotten Man" and "Petting in the Park, Bad Boy" are unravelled.

The Americans sally forth with "Gold Diggers" tucked under their arm and the Fraulein lovingly gets Wagner to first base. She hasn't yet decided if the soprano is all she should be when another young American blows in like a cyclone. She is catching a bus and implores that Wagner be removed for her to hear. "With my Eyes Wide-Open I'm Dreaming." The German woman wearily acquiesces, and we all hear about the insomnia of the dreaming man who ends by plaintively yodeling, "Do I deserve such a break? Pinch me to prove I'm awake. I can't believe that you're really mi-i-ine."

ALL records have two sides, and this is followed by "Love in Bloom." No matter in what direction your musical taste runs you have to listen to a crooner asking with a sob in his throat, "Can it be the trees which fill the breeze with rare and magic perfume? No, it isn't the trees, it's love in bloom. My heart was a desert. You planted the seed and this is the flower —" Right after the flower began to bloom, the German woman exploded. So love in bloom or blooming love is removed and we're in for some more Wagner!

Meantime someone is raising a terrible fuss in Hebrew. "Ze scandal." She has been waiting ten minutes to hear the latest edition of "Emek Avoda." She is told that "the gentleman is next."

The gentleman in question is a stalwart soul. You conclude that his choice will surely be "the Volga Boatman" or a bass singing "Down to the Sea in Ships." He steps up to the gramophone and puts his record on with due gravity. It is "Little Man, you've had a Busy Day" sung by a lady with a sweet bed-time-story voice. So the girl who is waiting for "Emek Avodah" has to hear all about how "Johnny won your marbles. Tell you what we'll do. Dad'll get some new ones right away. Can't you hear the

bugles softly saying, time you should be dreaming, —"

Someone wants a French tenor. Someone else is asking for Negro spirituals. And the girl who wants to hear Cab Galloway's red hot Negro Jazz band playing "Hotsy Totsy Toodle Doodle" has to listen to the "Barber of Seville."

DELIGHTFUL chaos. Adventurous romantic chaos. And maybe the German woman sits down at home, all set for a bit of Wagner to-night, and finds she's got "Love in Bloom."

—Palestine Post.

SHABBAS

By S. Beryl Lush.

THERE is a settled calm on Sabbath Eve,
Made strangely glorious by the beams
of light

Cast by the candle's glow, when they receive
The blessings of the Mother, whose eyes,
bright

With cheer and saintliness, are bent to give
Unto the Donor of all gifts, on high,
Mark of piety and gratitude, and love,
For Sabbath's holy girdled tribal tie.

The very air seems swept by seraph wings
And silence charges every niche with
dreams;

Some element of grandeur and of kings,
Of holy places and the temple beams,
Fill e'en the poorest hovel with its light,
Where candle's glow attests the Jewish
night.

—From "Sonnets in Amaranth."

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