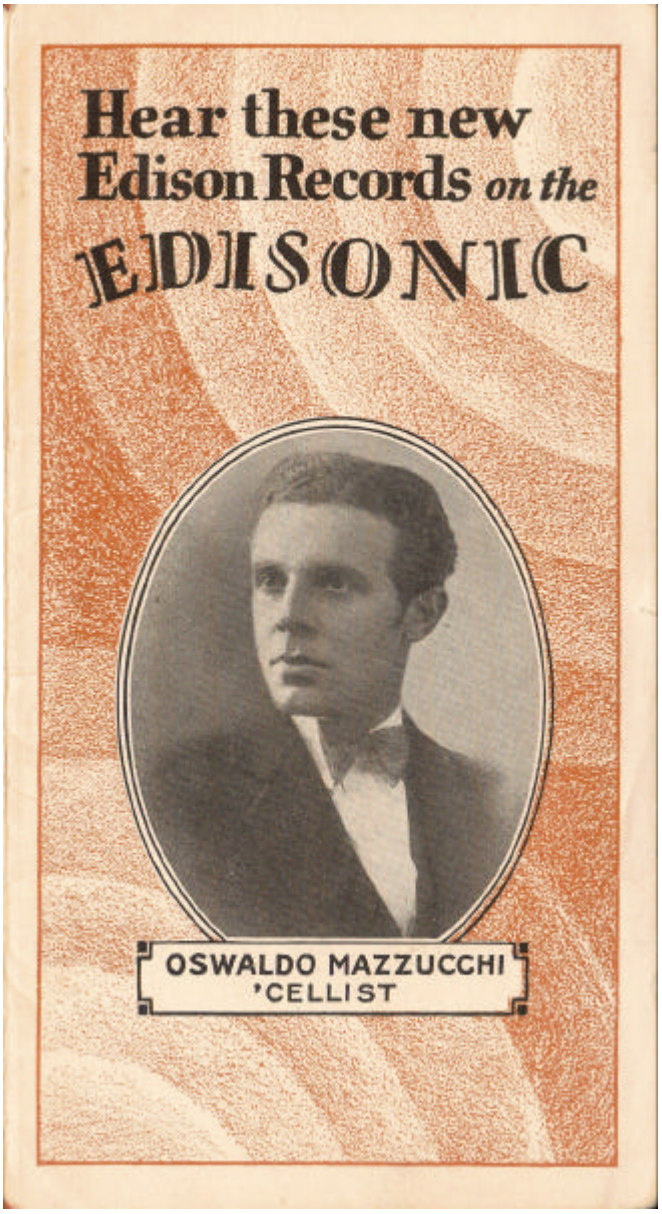
CHAMBER MUSIC ON EDISON



Oswaldo Mazzucchi, 'cellist of the Philharmonic String Quartet of New York, has made an amazing record this month–unlike any 'cello recording you ever heard before! It is a true musical masterpiece–thrilling, throbbing, glowing melodic beauty–which we do not know how to describe or explain. We do know that we like it–that you will like it–that the skilled musician and the man in the street will like it–that everyone who hears it will like it! For his two selections–especially the full, rich loveliness of **Serenade** are that type of great music which is really popular–which speaks a universal language.

Record 52220. Hear it! *Edison Supplement 4 IV 28*

Over the years there have been various claims as to who invented sound recording. But beyond reasonable doubt the first person to invent and construct a system which both recorded and played back was Thomas Alva Edison. That was in 1877. At first the medium of Edison's system was copper foil wound onto a cylinder. The quality of sound reproduced was primitive and the recording time was brief. A great step forward was the introduction of wax. At first Edison saw his device as an aid to office dictation, but soon its commercial value for entertainment became apparent. There was no means of duplication; each cylinder had to be recorded separately, though production was increased by having a bank of cylinder recording machines in front of the artist.

However, within a few years a young immigrant from Europe, Emile Berliner invented a system of recording onto a metal disc from from which many copies could be pressed in a hard rubber material.

By 1900 Edison in America and Pathé in Europe were the major contenders in the cylinder market, whereas the major supplier in the market for discs was the international group which included the Victor Talking Machine Company in North and South America and The Gramophone & Typewriter Company in all other territories.

By about 1900 also the first recordings of "serious" music began to appear. It must be borne in mind, however, that throughout the history of recording "serious" or "classical" music has always been a minority taste, with very few exceptions, subsidised by the "pop" market.

Around 1910 both Edison and Pathé, sales of cylinders declining, moved into the disc market. But they retained their vertical modulation "hill-and-dale" system, which made their records incompatible with the "lateral" cut records of the other companies.

There was a slight alleviation of the problem with the coming of electric recording in the mid-20s, when both Edison and Pathé released some items in both "lateral" and "hill-and-dale" formats, but it cannot have been commercially viable. In any case with the coming of the slump Edison ceased issuing records and Pathé limited itself to "lateral".

The NEW YORK TRIO

When it was founded in 1919, the players were: Clarence Adler, pf, Scipione Guidi, vn, and Cornelius van Vliet, vlc. After four seasons Louis Edlin, previously leader of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, replaced Guidi. The New York Trio appeared about two dozen times annually in New York and also on extensive tours of North America. The Trio played at the Berkshire Festival under the sponsorship of Mrs. Coolidge and at Clarence Adler's summer music camp at Lake Placid, 'Ka-ren-i-o-ke'. The Trio gave world and American premières of many modern works.

The NEW YORK STRING QUARTET

The Quartet was founded in 1919 by Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Pulitzer with the intention that it should be a permanent organisation for the advancement of chamber music.

Thus it first appeared only in October 1922 after three years' daily preparation. The Quartet played over much of North America, giving both classical and modern works. The composition of the Quartet varied over the years. At the time of its inception it was probably: Ottocar Cadek, violin; Jaroslav Siskovsky, violin; Ludvik Schwab, viola & Bedrich Vaska, cello. However, by the time of these recordings it was: Scipione Guidi, Arthur Lichstein, Louis E. Barzin & Oswaldo Mazzucchi. Later still, according to *Musical America* of 25 I 31, it was: Scipione Guidi, Arthur Lichstein, Louis E. Barzin & Alberigo Guidi.

E. (Elie) ROBERT SCHMITZ, pianist and composer. (1889 Paris-1949 San Francisco) He studied at the Conservatoire de Paris under Louis-Joseph Diémer and was awarded First Prize for Piano. He conducted L'Association Musicale Moderne et Artistique (later L'Association de Concerts Schmitz) from 1912 to 1914 and was heard by Saint-Saëns and D'Indy who were much impressed by him. He conducted the world première of works by Debussy, Milhaud and Roussel. In 1919 he toured the United States and in 1920 he founded the Franco-American Music Society in New York. In 1923 it became Pro Musica. In 1935 Schmitz published a system of piano study. His book on Debussy was published posthumously. His best-known pupil was probably Samuel Dolin.

The HOFFMAN QUARTET

The composition of this quartet was:
JACQUES HOFFMAN(N), 1st violin. (1868 Pustkovec, Austro-Hungary [now Czech Republic] -USA? 1938). He graduated from the Vienna Conservatoire in 1885. After playing with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna Opera Orchestra from 1885 to 1887 he moved to the United States and played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra form 1890 to 1926. He founded the Hoffman Quartet in 1902. Later he conducted the Harvard Alumni Orchestra.

ADOLF (also Adolph) BAK, 2nd violin. (1878 Hungary – 1943 USA?). He joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1900 and left it after the Musician's Strike of 1920. He then worked with the National Symphony Orchestra, New York. For some years he played in the Mischa Elman String Quartet. he taught for twenty years at the Vienna Conservatoire.
KARL RISSLAND, viola. (1872-1960). Although he played viola in the Hoffman Quartet he was actually a violinist. He played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1894 to 1920 and, like Adolf Bak, may have left over the Musician's Strike of that year. Subsequently he played viola in the Elman String Quartet.
CARL BARTH, cellist. (1869 Germany- ?). He studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire and played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1894 to 1937.

Some Notes on the Recordings:

The two cylinders of the Hoffmann Quartet may well be the earliest recordings of a "classical" string quartet. The sound is remarkably good, but the Edison Company was not used to classical music. On the cylinders and their boxes we find:
28018 Molto Lento ("Music of the Spheres") Quartette op.17, No.2 (Rubinstein)
28168 Andante cantabile-Quartette op.11 E flat major (Tchaikovsky)

Trio in B flat major, Op.99, D.898 (Schubert)
Allegro moderato - change of tempo at 3' 40"
Generally one tries to make side changes within a movement inaudible; e.g. by ensuring that the same pitch operates on both sides of the join. However, in the case of the join of side 1 to side 2 in the first movement there is a sudden and considerable change of tempo. The two tempi could, today, be manipulated electronically to merge whilst maintaining pitch, but this was felt to be verging on faking, so the disparity has been left.

Quintette in E flat major, Op.44 (Schumann)
Raymond Wile notes for this recording: "Electrical Recording Begins"
Most companies began to use the electrical recording process in mid-1925.
The Edison Company, however, buried its head in the sand until 1928.

"Form" was the Edison company's term for its monthly release sheets, the number of the form being formed from the date.

Form No. 4428 [4 IV 28] "Records issued during February and March" includes this recording.
Form No. 4728 [4 VII 28] "Records issued during February, March, April and May" has the above and also:
Quartet (American) in F major played by the Philharmonic String Quartet of New York 80891/2
Presumably: Quartet No.6 in F major Op.96 "American" (Dvorák)

Sources consulted:
Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music-W. W. Cobbett, 1963
Dictionary of Music and Musicians-George Grove, 1954
Edison Blue Amberol Cylinders-Sydney Carter, 1978
Edison Disc Recordings-Raymond Wile, 1978
An Encyclopaedia of the Violin-Alberto Bachmann, 1937
Musical America
Vertical-cut Cylinders and Discs-Girard and Barnes
www.stokowski.org/Boston_Symphony_Music
Truesound Online Discographies

Acknowledgements: Symposium Records thanks Raymond Glaspole for making available the recordings of the Mendelssohn trio and for biographical information. Thanks are due also to Paul Lewis and Adrian Tuddenham for assistance with the production.

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