

# REVIEWS

TUTOR: "CONCERTINA TWO" by FRANK BUTLER.

Frank Butler, author of the well-known and all too little appreciated tutor for the English Concertina, 'The Concertina' (Oak Publications, New York, 1976) has just published a follow up book which he calls "Concertina Two", Concertina One obviously being the first book.

In his foreword he writes:

" The book contains exercises, studies and solos.  
All are graded... and introduce playing in all the  
usual keys. "

One gets ready to be suitably bored with routine stuff. But one quickly finds that being bored is out. From the first page with its rollicking Danish folk song to the Mozart Sonata on the last page there is not one dull moment for the student. Even the scales come in a new way. They are harmonised and they carry intriguing variations. Their arpeggio chords are given unexpected settings that make the player want to play them a second time and then, play them again 'just to repeat them'.

All types of music are included in this book: folk music, dance music, reels, opera, studies by Frank Butler and works by the great musicians of the past. Between the "Jolly Cobbler" from Denmark and Mozart's Sonata there is a wealth of music and instruction all carefully graded to the players needs as he builds up his or her skill and understanding. Almost every page carries explanatory comment. It would be virtually impossible for the determined concertinist not to progress under this skilled and informed guidance.

One interesting feature is the space (three pages) given to the key of Ab - the first irregularly fingered scale on the English concertina. One meets quite a bit of music in this key and the studies and pieces given here are valuable. The concertinist will also find the two pages dealing with "Ornaments and Grace Notes" a big help with useful comment and much practical illustration.

One senses that the counsel given in the controversial areas of breathing (bellows control), vibrato and stance comes from personal experience....as for that matter, is the impression throughout the book.

'Concertina Two' is an important work. The concertinist who wants to get anywhere has to ask whether they can afford to pass it by. The player who has the wit and wisdom to work thoughtfully through Frank Butler's first tutor and who follows it up with 'Concertina Two' (especially if working with Alf Edwards' tutor as well) must become a good concertinist if they have any flair for music at all. As these three practical manuals are readily available, there is no longer any excuse for poor workmanship or a poor appreciation of one's concertina.

And finally, just for the interest of it, Frank Butler has also published a collection of 'twenty-two popular and classical airs' arranged for players of modest ability (that means harmonised folks!) in a book small enough to fit into a concertina case. It's a gem and will be quite inexpensive, so you can have unending fun with it.

Alex Richards

### RECORDS: Music Minus One

Attention all frustrated chamber musicians; now it is possible for you to have a complete chamber orchestra at your beck and call 24 hours a day, even if you live in Wagga Wagga.

Music Minus One, a record company based in New York City, produce a line of several hundred records and cassettes featuring selections of everything from renaissance music to jazz, but all recorded minus one part. This missing part is 'your' part and you play along with the record to complete the music. There is repertoire for instruments as diverse as violin and mellophone (but not concertina, the philistines!) as well as some instructional discs, e.g. 'Ear Training', 'The Art of Improvisation' and 'The Art of Mixing Music and Drinks'(!?!).

As the English treble concertina has a range comparable to that of the flute and violin, most of the selections available for these instruments would be suitable for the concertina, provided the player is fanatical enough! The written music for the missing part is included with the record, and some of the recordings (those in the 'Laureate competition series') are graded as to difficulty. As a humane gesture, some of the more difficult tracks are repeated at an "alternate" (slower) tempo. Some of the records have both the complete and the 'minus one' version of the work; this can be helpful for those unfamiliar with a particular genre of music or for those whose reading is a bit unsure. Unfortunately, most of the record covers don't provide much information beyond a listing of the works included and the name of