

OBITUARY

ABBASUDDIN AHMED

Abbasuddin Ahmed was born in Cooch Behar, West Bengal, on October 27th, 1901, and he died on December 30th, 1959. He made his début in the musical world as a singer of Bengali modern music; but early in the thirties his talents found their true expression when he became almost the sole exponent of Bengali folk music on records, on the radio and in films. He has recorded about 700 titles for the HMV, Twin, Senola and other gramophone companies of India.

Abbasuddin's death is a great loss to Bengali music in general and Bengali folk song in particular. He succeeded—where many others have failed—in preserving the real flavour and atmosphere of folk music during studio-performances, in spite of the unavoidable arrangements for that purpose. He had that special quality in his voice, and through the strength of his personality he was able to impart that same quality to the musicians with whom he worked. If people in East and West Bengal have come to love the folk music of their own country, it is undoubtedly largely due to Abbasuddin's never-failing enthusiasm and deep love for the music he sang, music which had its roots firmly in the village traditions he knew from childhood and never betrayed.

ARNOLD BAKE

ILMARI KROHN

On April 25th, 1960, died Ilmari Krohn at the age of ninety-two after a lifetime of assiduous labours in different fields of music. He was primarily a theoretician, but also a practising musician, an organist, a composer, and an expert on folk music. He came of a family that has contributed greatly to the cultural life of Finland, and his brother was the eminent folklorist, Kaarle Krohn, a specialist on the national epic *Kalevala*. As a young student, Ilmari Krohn set out on his first journey as a collector of Finnish folk music in the summer of 1886, and these journeys continued for many years. He became aware of the existence of a group of melodies hitherto overlooked: the spiritual songs, a traditional heritage among the pietists of the countryside. Many of these songs, unique in their beauty, were later incorporated in hymns of the Finnish church. Krohn's treatise: "Über die Art und Entstehung der geistlichen Volkslieder in Finnland" (1899) gained him the office of Docent at the University of Helsinki, and eventually his researches were rewarded with a professorial chair. In 1898 began the publication of Finnish folk music in the great work *Suomen Kansan Sävelmiä*. Krohn edited three volumes, assisted by A. Launis and A. O. Vaisänen, the first, the spiritual melodies; the second, the folk songs proper; and the third, dance tunes. The work was completed in 1933. Krohn invented his own method for the systematization of melodies, based on the cadences.

But folk music was only one field on which he brought his energies to bear. His theories on rhythm and musical form, set out in five volumes, have attracted much attention. Among other works his books on the symphonies of Sibelius and Bruckner must be mentioned. As a creative musician Ilmari Krohn was very productive. Most of his compositions belong to the field of religious music and they include three oratorios. An opera, *Tuhotulva* (The Deluge) has also been performed in Helsinki.

GRETA DAHLSTRÖM

ELIZABETH BURCHENAL

Dr. Burchenal passed away on November 21st, 1959. A life which so early found its work has now found its rest; a life so abundantly full has now left its authentic legacy. Throughout her long career, Elizabeth Burchenal endeavoured to seek and to perpetuate that which was authentic in folk arts, and she was known specifically for her work in the field of folk dance. She was founder and long-time executive director of The Folk Art

Center in New York, and she also conducted research on folk dance in Europe and America. She was author and editor of various compilations on folklore, music, and dance, and she had been correspondent to the International Folk Music Council. In 1943, Boston University conferred on her the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

GEORGE K. MAKECHNIE

ALEXANDER MARTIN FREEMAN

A. M. Freeman, who died in London on December 18th, 1959, in his eighty-second year, was a scholar distinguished in various fields, not least that of folk music. A native of Surrey, he was educated at Bedford Grammar School and Lincoln College, Oxford. After taking his degree he settled down to a life of unremitting study and reflective writing which best suited his habit of mind; and his marriage to a lady from Donegal gave an Irish bent to his work almost from the outset of his literary career.

During a holiday in Ballyvourney, County Cork, in 1913, he became aware of the rich tradition of popular song in the Irish language which still survived there. His great Ballyvourney Collection resulted and appeared as numbers 23–25 of the *Journal of the Folk Song Society*, 1920–21. It consists of nearly a hundred songs, with the original texts, prose translations and annotations, constituting incomparably the finest collection published in our time of Irish songs noted from oral tradition.

Freeman was a member of the Publication Committee of the Irish Folk Song Society from 1920 until its demise in 1939 and the issues of its *Journal* published in that period all profited by his care and advice. He was also an occasional contributor of songs and texts (from Salonika, where he served in the First World War, and elsewhere) to the *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*. He was a member of the editorial board of the Society, as well as that of its predecessor, the Folk-Song Society.

DONAL O'SULLIVAN

DANICA S. JANKOVIĆ

Whenever it is necessary to quote an authoritative opinion on some aspect of Yugoslav folk dance, it is to the books of the sisters Ljubica and Danica Janković, those pioneers and eminent scholars, that one turns. This sisterly and scholarly partnership ended suddenly on April 19th, 1960, when Danica S. Janković died in Belgrade. As a person she was unforgettable for her goodness, gentleness and modesty; as a worker in her field she is irreplaceable, because of her indefatigable industry, breadth of culture, and many gifts, which included a fine sense of movement, of rhythm, and feeling for music, painting, literature and learning.

Born at Lešnica (Serbia) on May 7th, 1898, she was educated in Beograd and England (in London and at Oxford). She taught in High Schools in Belgrade and Tetovo (Macedonia) and for many years held the post of University Librarian in Belgrade, from which she retired on account of ill-health. She made excellent translations of Jane Austen, Sheridan, Walpole, Marivaux, Le Sage and Molière.

The interest of the Janković sisters in folk dance dated from their early childhood. It was later rekindled by their encounter with Serbian and Macedonian folk dancers, and the fascination of this rediscovery led them to a field in which they found inexhaustible scope for scholarly enquiry, and in which they were to achieve distinction.

Their life-work is a truly vast collection of Yugoslav folk dances in nine volumes, of which seven were issued between 1934 and 1952; the eighth and ninth volumes are still in manuscript. This outstanding work can only be compared with the famous collection of folk songs by Vuk Karadžić. The collection merits this comparison not only because of the impressive number of dances described—over 900—together with tunes, songs and customs, nor merely because of the treatment of the material collected and the brilliant deductions made by these profound analysts of ethnochoreologic phenomena, but because of its pioneering character in the history of the study of Yugoslav folk dance.