

ILOSFALVY, Robert, tenor

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Watch That New Hungarian

By ROBERT T. JONES

AMONG the few delights in life that remain delightful as time goes on, the making of new friends and the remembering of old ones rank high on the list. For record collectors, there is a special twinge of nostalgia in seeing the reappearance of a favorite old recording — hopefully, refurbished in sound and perhaps adorned with a photograph that one has never run across before—and a jump of the pulse in finally being able to buy a recording that one put off buying until it was too late.

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An even less frequent thrill occurs when one discovers a new singer that nobody else has heard of. The Hungarian tenor, Robert Ilosfalvy, is not exactly unknown, but his fame has been confined mostly to Hungary, Cologne, London and San Francisco. Thanks to a collection of operatic arias by Mr. Ilosfalvy (Qualiton LPX 11312) it looks as if his comparative obscurity might be short-lived.

Ilosfalvy



Robert Ilosfalvy

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Ilosfalvy (pronounced ILOSH-fahlvy) is in his early 30's and, thanks to Communist restrictions, was confined to his native Hungary until fairly recently. A taciturn individual who apparently does not like to confide in the press—and whose speech is limited to Hungarian besides—he would seem to be a problem for press agents. Photographs show a large, blond man with considerable heft but reviews comment on his handsome stage appearance and his good acting, which suggests that cameras do, after all, lie.

Whether microphones also lie remains to be seen. The voice that comes across this excellently engineered disk is a slender, gleaming tenor,

weighty enough for "Lohengrin" and "Manon Lescaut" but with a fluency and lyric quality that are ideal for Donizetti and Flotow.

The standard of singing ranges from superb ("Una furtiva Lagrima," all the Puccini items, the Ingemisco from Verdi's Requiem, and two arias by Erkel) to good—but - with - qualifications ("Trovatore," "Gioconda," "Aida"). The qualifications in the heavier arias are due to a trace of effort in the climaxes and a tendency to flat when passing from middle to upper register.

Like both Fritz Wunderlich and Jussi Björling, Ilosfalvy's musical style and taste are immaculate, free from the sort of excesses

that usually plague tenor singing. His German and Italian are first-rate, his sense of rhythm good but not noteworthy. Withal, he sounds as if he might be the up-and-coming tenor of the next decade. Probably it will be only a matter of time until he arrives at the Metropolitan—he was invited to sing there in "Manon Lescaut" but had to refuse because of commitments in Europe. At least, the Met seems aware of him.

