
LOUISE HANSON DYER†

It was only at the end of her life that Louise Hanson Dyer became interested in folk music: the Quebec Conference of 1961 was her introduction to the International Folk Music Council. Had she lived longer, she would undoubtedly have brought her vitality and generosity to the help of the Council's work. For her passionate interest in unexplored music goes back to the publication, thirty years ago, of her magnificent volumes of thirteenth-century polyphony: at that time there were very few singers or conductors who knew the music of Pérotin. Her recent interest in unusual folk instruments also had its roots in the nineteen-thirties: who but Louise could have succeeded in commissioning six of the leading composers in Paris to write pieces for the home-made bamboo pipe?

It was this practical side of her pioneering spirit that led her to realize that her publications did not go far enough: they had to be linked to recordings that would bring the music to life to a wider audience than musicologists. The Lyrebird publications and recordings will ensure that her name will be remembered in years to come. But her other, equally important, life-work may be forgotten, for it was largely anonymous. No one could count the number of unknown young singers, players or composers to whom she proved a warm-hearted, encouraging patron.

Those of us who were her friends will remember her intense enjoyment of life and her obstinate determination to win every artistic battle, against any odds.

IMOGEN HOLST