

NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH COMPANY  
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

COPY

Mexico, D.F., May 2, 1904.

Mr. Walter Stevens, Manager Foreign Department,  
National Phonograph Company,  
No. 83 Chambers Street,  
New York City.

Dear sir:

RECORD PLANT

I am pleased to advise that we have finally started work, and although still working under difficulties, propped around on boxes, etc., we have already turned out some good masters. We had the first trial on the 6th, and succeeded in working all that day and yesterday. We had made a date for the 5th, but the singers failed to show up. This, I fear, will be the principal cause of delay, as the great fault with the people here is that they are generally very little to be depended on when it comes to keeping an appointment.

Friday we secured masters of two zarzuela selections, female voices. Yesterday we secured masters of four male solos, guitar accompaniment. I invited the dealers to come to the plant this morning to hear what we had taken, and they seemed very pleased with the results. As I consider that the dealer's criticisms, especially those of Mr. Morales Cortazar, will be of great value, I have asked them to come to the plant a couple of hours every Sunday morning to hear what may have been taken the week past. In order to get the most out of the time consumed in laboratory, I have arranged to do all the necessary cutting and arranging of pieces in

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the evening. This not only enables us to run along more smoothly during the execution of the work, when the time consumed is expensive, but gives me a chance to consult various opinions as to whether the cuts, arrangements, etc. are made to the best advantage artistically, before they are recorded.

Although I had all the necessary preliminary arrangements made before Mr. Werner's arrival, I have come across so many details in connection with getting the work started, that it has kept me pretty busy to keep up, and I believe that during the taking of records, I shall have practically no time for anything else. I have been experiencing a little difficulty with the talent, due partly to the other company's competition and partly to the repetitions that are necessary for each selection. I have, therefore, been obliged to make some readjustments in prices. I rather expected this, however, as the original arrangements were very low indeed; but am still keeping way under the prices paid at the factory.

I believe it would be well to forward the masters to the factory just as soon as we have, say 100 of them - that would mean about 50 selections. I shall make arrangements to avoid having the cases containing same opened at the border; they will then be inspected at New York, and you will be able to have the proper care exercised in doing this. Unless otherwise instructed by you, I shall consign the master records to New York, sending by express. The machines and blanks, etc. for the plant here arrived in very good shape. Evidently the boxes were not all opened at Laredo.

In connection with the selections to be recorded here, would state that the dealers believe it would be policy to take some

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fifteen or twenty songs from Italian operas by female voices. They say these records would sell very well, and as you know, we have practically none in our list. There are two very fine soprano singers in the city who can, I believe, be obtained for this purpose, but as this would be somewhat of a departure from the work you wish done here, I request that you instruct me in the matter. I understand that the Columbia people have taken some ten or fifteen Italian records here. These will undoubtedly have a ready sale among the higher classes, if good.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 29th ult. enclosing a copy of Mr. Schermerhorn's letter of April 28th. These have had the proper attention from both Mr. Werner and myself, and I believe we understand the conditions thoroughly. We have arranged to have a series of experiments with such instruments as may prove difficult to record, and we will make no masters of such orchestras, etc., until we are satisfied that they can be recorded sufficiently loud to be commercial without losing the individuality of the Mexican music. Where it is found impossible to combine the two results, we will not attempt to take the records. We will, therefore, involve only the cost of a few experiments.

Yours very truly,

R. CABANAS.