

## Vivant

# Notes on a Promising New Orleans Soprano

By LILY JACKSON

A carefree observation that "I have been singing longer than I have been studying" in no way lessens the attention this recent winner of the vocal auditions sponsored by the New Orleans Junior Philharmonic Society is devoting to her study of music. It's only a characterization of the zest and enthusiasm this 16-year-old soprano has for the pleasures of "just singing."

Phyllis Treigle comes by the joys and talents of singing quite naturally. She is the daughter of the late Norman Treigle, the renowned bass-baritone of such talent he was called New Orleans' gift to opera, concert and oratorio.

It was in 1948 at the first program given by the re-activated Junior Philharmonic Society that Norman Treigle, age 21, was selected to be one of the performers.

Now almost 30 years later, Phyllis Treigle was selected by this same organization which was a re-formation of an earlier group of music teachers who had banded together in the 1930s to present talented students in a series of programs. The original organization was called the Junior Philharmonic Society as it was under the sponsorship of the Board of the Philharmonic Society, an affiliate of Community Concerts. Today, the Junior Philharmonic is an independent organization with its main purpose to offer young people the opportunity to perform in a professional atmosphere before representative audiences.

Phyllis Treigle, a bouncy and effervescent high school senior, says she has been singing "I guess forever." She has sung in her church choir since she was 7 years old, but she only began taking vocal instruction a year ago, explain-

ing this belated expedient with "girls aren't ready to start lessons until they are 15 or 16 years old. Otherwise, my father would have taught me sooner."

She is now studying with Mary Tortorich, head of the voice department at Loyola University, where she works on such rudiments as breathing, placement, mask, dome. Though she practices every day, she says she doesn't have to spend too much time at it, declaring the secret is to "discipline yourself." She is aided in her practicing by her mother, who proudly feels her daughter has a lot of "natural ability."

Though winning the audition with selections from opera (one of her trio of renditions was "Voi Che Sapete" from the "Marriage of Figaro") Phyllis professes an ambivalence of ambition. She likes the idea of musical comedy, labelling herself "a ham," who adores the idea of performing in this medium. She is an accomplished and experienced actress, having appeared in the lead role in "Little Mary Sunshine" at the Loyola Summer Music Camp as well as in productions of "Barefoot in the Park" and "My Three Angels."

"It's just a question of whether you want to sing in English or a foreign language," says Phyllis, though either way, she plans to pursue a college course in theater arts.

As an honor student at Ecole Classique, she has a busy curriculum schedule, but can always "find the time" for singing, laughingly relating how she often will burst into an aria in unexpected places, much to the surprise of her friends. She confesses to getting a "little bit nervous" at times before appearing on a stage, but then says that she "just enjoys singing so" that this



— Staff Photo

## Phyllis Treigle

buoys her spirits to give her an assurance of performance, adding that "I'm not afraid of the audience," an obvious requisite for a polished and poised presentation of the caliber to win auditions in this highly competitive music field.

She says her father "always wanted

me to perform," which she does happily, still singing in her church choir every Sunday, or just gathering around a friend's piano, while mulling over her options in either opera or musical comedy as a very promising soprano. As she puts it, "It's all singing; it's just appealing to a different audience."