

BAND RECORDS

ACO.

- G.15966 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Band of H.M. Welsh Guards: Reminiscences of Mendelssohn (arr. Godfrey), Parts 1 and 2.
G.15967 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Palace Military Band: The Standard Bearer March (Fahrbach) and Britain's First Line—Naval Patrol (Williams).

BELTONA.

- 1004 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Beltona Military Band: The King's Escort March (Ellis) and The Soldiers' Chorus, Faust (Gounod).

COLUMBIA.

- 9087 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Band of H.M. Grenadier Guards: Poet and Peasant Overture (von Suppé), Parts 1 and 2.
3890 (10in., 3s.).—Band of H.M. Grenadier Guards: Rigoletto Selection (Verdi), Parts 1 and 2.
3925 (10in., 3s.).—Band of H.M. Grenadier Guards: Il Trovatore Selection (Verdi), Parts 1 and 2.

DUOPHONE.

- A.1028 (12in., 4s.).—Mackenzie-Rogan's Military Band: Poet and Peasant Overture (von Suppé) and Fra Diavolo Overture (Auber).
B.5146 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Mackenzie-Rogan's Military Band: Graceful Dance—Henry VIII. Dances (Sullivan) and Gypsy Rondo (Haydn).

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

- B.2299 (10in., 3s.).—Band of H.M. Coldstream Guards: Private Ortheris (Ansell), Parts 1 and 2.

REGAL.

- G.8566 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Silver Stars Band: Selection of Wilfred Sanderson's Songs, Parts 1 and 2.
G.8585 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Silver Stars Band: Selection of W. H. Squire's Songs, Parts 1 and 2.
G.8586 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Silver Stars Band: Merry Wives of Windsor Overture (Nicolai, arr. D. Godfrey).
G.8574 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Besses o' the Barn Band: Edwinstone (arr. Owen) and Harvey House (Gaskell, arr. Owen).

VOCALION.

- K.05234 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Band of H.M. Life Guards: Overture di Ballo (Sullivan), Parts 1 and 2.

ZONOPHONE.

- 2711 and 2712 (two 10in., 5s.).—Home Guards Band and Choir: Wembley Military Tattoo, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4.
2725 (10in. 2s. 6d.).—Black Diamonds Band: In a Persian Market (Ketelbey) and the Caliph (G. W. Byng).

A thoroughly bad record is a comparative rarity nowadays, but *Reminiscences of Mendelssohn* can only be put into that class. The recording is not at all successful, the playing is poor and the selection has not been "cut" judiciously. The tempi are painfully dragged in places and the whole reading and playing is curiously lacking in punch. *Britain's First Line* is a patrol built up on old nautical songs. It is very cleverly done and is both well-played and recorded, as is *The Standard Bearer*, which, however, is rather a monotonous march. *The King's Escort* contains much more variety and is both played and recorded well. The piccolo obbligato is neither too prominent nor too retiring. *The Soldiers' Chorus* from *Faust* lends itself admirably to a military band arrangement and a very successful record of it has been accomplished.

The three new records by the Grenadier Guards Band are all made by the new process and are very brilliant. *The Poet and Peasant Overture* must have been recorded scores of times, but this version will be none the less welcome to many people, and, as is to be expected, it is an advance on all previous issues. I dislike the arrangement as the air in the section immediately following the brief introduction is given to the saxophone as a solo. In most arrangements this is played either by the clarinets or the horns. Either of these is preferable to the present one. The solo saxophone lacks depth and body and sounds very thin and reedy on the higher notes. Both the new operatic selections are good and one is very glad to see that some of the better-known airs have been omitted in favour of lesser known ones. Thus, *The Anvil Chorus* and *Home to our mountains* are not included in the

selection from *Il Trovatore*, side 2 of which, however, is completely devoted to the popular *Miserere*. Similarly, in the *Rigoletto Selection*, *Caro Nome* and *La Donna è Mobile* are omitted, but room is found for *Questa o Quella*. The second side of the latter record is rather a disappointment. It contains the famous quartet *Bella figlia dell'amore*, in which the tenor part is played by the trombone. I have heard this arrangement before and to me it always sounds too ponderous. In this record, moreover, the tone of the instrument is rather unsteady.

It is hardly fair to compare the record previously mentioned with the very much cut version of *The Poet and Peasant Overture* recorded by the old process by the Duophone Company. A comparison is, however, inevitable, and it is rather surprising to find that the bass comes out even better in the latter than in the former. Nevertheless, the former is without doubt the better record and would have been even better had tympani been used as they have by Lieut.-Col. Mackenzie-Rogan. *Fra Diavolo*, even in this attenuated version, contains a lot of padding and is not very interesting. A far better record in every way is the one which contains Haydn's *Gypsy Rondo* and Sullivan's *Graceful Dance*. The delicacy of the playing is quite in keeping with the music and this record can be recommended to all and sundry without hesitation. I do not know from what the rondo of Haydn is taken, but it is a very welcome addition to the repertoire of military band music.

Private Ortheris is founded on *The British Grenadiers*, *The Campbells are coming*, and other well-known songs of this type. These are entwined together and developed with free variations in a very musicianly fashion. The playing of the Coldstream Guards Band is excellent and the recording full and effective.

For those who like selections of popular songs, the two records by the Silver Stars Band of the songs of Wilfred Sanderson and W. H. Squire respectively will prove splendid value at half-a-crown each. The recording and playing are quite good and, as is usual in Regal records, the surfaces are beautifully silky. I very much wish I could say as much for this band's record of *The Merry Wives of Windsor Overture*. The recording is fair on the whole, though the reiterated four notes at the beginning can hardly be heard until the drum is reinforced by other instruments. I do not like the tempo adopted by Mr. Ketelbey for the section which commences about two-thirds of the way through side 1. The intonation throughout is by no means impeccable and that of the cornet at the beginning of the second side really bad.

Edwinstone and *Harvey House* are two sacred airs of the type that frequently appear in brass band programmes under the style of "Air Varie." The legato playing is beautifully broad and smooth, and well sustained. The recording is free from blemish.

Sullivan's *Overture di Ballo* is really magnificently played by the Life Guards Band and is the most attractive record among those at present under review. I have not got a score, but speaking from memory there are only two small cuts, one near the beginning and one near the end, and both are harmless. The clarinet playing throughout is superb and if there is any criticism to offer it is that the long and difficult runs on this instrument in the brilliant finale are not quite prominent enough. This is real "middle-brow" music and, with very few exceptions, should be enjoyed by all.

The supremacy of the Grenadier Guards' records of the *Wembley Military Tattoo* is once more unsuccessfully challenged—this time by the Home Guards Band, complete with all the necessary etceteras. The programme differs somewhat from that in all the other versions I have heard and is not very successful. The recording is brilliant, but the diminuendos used to suggest the effect of fading away in the distance are not very well managed. This new version, however, scores over all of them on one point—the recording of the three strokes on the drum at the beginning of *Les Huguenots Troop*. They have to be heard to be believed. On the whole, there is little to choose between this set of records and the other 5s. version (Regal). The former are rather more brilliantly recorded, but the programme of the latter is the better.

The Caliph is a pleasing light composition which hints at Scheherazade here and there and which contains a few other snippets which are vaguely familiar. The oriental touches are not as crude and obvious as is the case in many works of this type and playing and recording are excellent. Still another version of *In a Persian Market* has appeared, this time recorded by the new process. Let us hope that all the other Companies will not think it incumbent upon them to record it.

W. A. C.