



BAND RECORDS

A *Cornish Carnival* invites comparison with some of the movements in the military band suites of Holst and Vaughan-Williams to its very decided detriment. The playing of the **Beltona Military Band** is very good, as it is in a trifle called *Bells across the Meadow* on the reverse (Beltona 1168). The latter is also issued on Aco G. 16160 backed in this case by a very bright performance of the *March* from Luigini's *Ballet Russe* played by the **Welsh Guards Band** which is worth more musically than the other two items put together. In all cases the recording is good although a certain amount of the clarity is lost and a hardness and shrillness imposed whenever a medium volume is exceeded. I can best describe this by comparing it to the quality obtained from a wireless loud-speaker when the valves are overloaded. Possibly the causes are similar but I leave it to more technical minds to say whether this is so or whether it is mere coincidence.

For some reason or other the **Coldstream Guards Band** seems to have gained less from the new process of recording than any other band and a comparison between their new records and some made ten years ago reveals the latter as surprisingly good and almost able to hold their own. In *Colonel Bogy* the lilt which should make this march so attractive has quite eluded Lieut.-Evans. *Youth and Vigour* (H.M.V., B.2408), a much less interesting march, is both played and recorded far better. In the former the bass section of the band is distinctly below par.

It is a real pleasure to welcome the **Irish Guards Band** back to the gramophone world. This band made many good records in the past but it must be some years since they made any new ones. The Imperial Company deserve our thanks for reintroducing the band at such a modest price as two shillings per disc. *Martial Moments* (1717) is played crisply at a quick tempo and the recording of the middle of the band is exceptionally good. The other record issued this month contains *In a Chinese Temple Garden*, and *The Ride of the Valkyries* (1716). The former is well played but I do not like the phrasing in the latter, and the band employed is too small to do real justice to this difficult and exciting music.

The **Silver Stars Band** have made a splendid record of the ever-green "1812" *Overture*. (Regal G. 1039). The detail is clean, the recording of the tympani, cymbals and other gadgets is good, and the tone throughout very rich and full. For once the tubular bells are in tune. The playing of the same band in *Faithful and Bold* and *The Happy Warrior* (G. 8775) is the best march playing I have heard by this band yet. This is an excellent record in every way.

Everyone concerned with the making of the record of Victor Herbert's *Suite of Serenades—Spanish, Chinese, Cuban, and Oriental*—(Voc. K.05293) deserves hearty congratulations. The playing of the **Life Guards Band** is impeccable, the recording superb, the music well off the beaten track, and the surface much improved. This is the most faithful military band record made by the Vocalion Company yet, and ranks as one of the best half-dozen made by any Company, if not actually the best. The basses are beautifully fat and the tympani have a real "ping." The suite is very pleasant light music and a good antidote to jazz. In my copy the labels are on the wrong sides.

The record of *Onward, Christian Soldiers* and *Abide with me* recorded at Whitefield's Tabernacle, London by a **Choir, Organ and Band of H.M. Scots Guards** (Winner 4582) belongs to the class advertised as "mighty." I personally do not like the dramatic pauses in the latter but the recording and general effect are decidedly good.

I suppose it is too much to expect even Sousa to be at his best always, but surely there are plenty of fine marches by him still unrecorded without having recourse to such pot boilers as *The Thunderer* and *The March of the Mitten Men* (Zono 2858). The former is largely composed of fanfares and the latter of a very paltry arrangement of *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. Judging both

by its title and by its quality of tone the **Philadelphia Band** is an American Band. At all events it is a very fine and very large band. This record, both for playing and recording, is comparable with those made by Pryor's and Sousa's Band respectively and issued by the H.M.V. Company during the last few months.

The distinctive tone colours of the oboe and clarinet are very faithfully reproduced and form a nice contrast in *Une Soirée près du lac* and *Loïen du Bal* respectively (Actuelle 11267). Both these pieces are graceful, the latter being a waltz of the old-fashioned tuneful kind. The playing of the **Garde Républicaine Band** is very delicate and satisfying.

The Battle of Waterloo (Col. 9184) is a sheer waste of fine recording and good playing by the **Grenadier Guards Band**. The services of the full band, a drum and fife band and the Scots Guards pipers are all utilized in turn and the piece is a pot-pourri of The *Marcellaise*, *Men of Harlech*, The *British Grenadiers*, a couple of hymns and a few other oddments interspersed with bugle calls and the whole resting on a strongly painted background of battle noises and other unpleasant sounds.

In the *Poet and Peasant Overture* played by the **Coldstream Guards Band** (H.M.V. C.1315) an old arrangement is used, I fancy. At any rate, I much prefer it to the arrangement used by the Grenadier Guards Band in their record of this overture issued last year. I wish I could say the same about the playing, but I must confess that I find the phrasing very lifeless and the general interpretation much more calculated to reveal the brilliance of the performers than anything else. The recording is excellent.

W. A. C.

MISCELLANEOUS

The new H.M.V. records (C.1311 and 1312, 12in., 4s. 6d. each) of *Instruments of the Orchestra* are a great acquisition, which will be appreciated by most people; needless to say, the recording and arrangement are excellent. Personally, I should like also a record with the instruments of the dance band separately treated. Another record which I omitted last month was that of the **Gresham Singers**, admirably recorded in *Sweet Kitty Clover* and *Wake, Miss Lindy* (H.M.V., B.2410, 3s.). In the mid-month list there is **Sir Harry Lauder** in *Doughie the Baker* and the evergreen *I Love a Lassie*, as lively and infectious as ever (D.1197, 12in., 6s. 6d.); **Jack Smith**, still able to charm us, in *I'm tellin' the birds* and *There ain't no maybe* (B.2414 3s.); **Correll and Gosden** in the fascinating *Meadow Lark* (B.2412, 3s.); and **John McCormack** marvellously sincere in *When Twilight comes* and *Calling me back to you* (D.A.840, 6s.). **Marek Weber and his Orchestra** break up a Strauss waltz into two parts on a ten-inch record, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (B.2406, 3s.), with an unexpected and effective steel guitar passage at beginning and end. This is a superb record of the Austrian waltz lilt, and I must add a word of praise for the **Salon Orchestra** in that favourite of mine *Un peu d'Amour* (shall I ever forget the Elsie Southgate record of it on Zonophone ten years ago?) and *Little Star* (B.2415, 3s.); and for **Frank Banta** in piano versions, not for dancing, of two popular tunes, *For my Sweetheart* and *Just a Little longer* (B.2411, 3s.). This is not for every taste, but it is, in its way, almost perfect.

The March Beltona list has several vocal records in which **Eva Sternoyd** (a light soprano with considerable colour in her voice), **Eric Wyndham** (a good tenor) **Charles Barry** (a baritone whose fault, if any, is that he is a trifle too refined for his songs), and **John Roberts** (that reliable baritone), take part. Perhaps the best is 1161 (2s. 6d.) *Hello! Swanee, Hello!* and *All's well that ends well*; but all are of a good standard and the accompaniments are more than adequate. So is the unnamed accompanist of **Gordon Taylor**, who has a slight edge in his violin playing (at least on my H.M.V. machine), but is none the less very desirable. *Because I love you*, the best waltz of recent months, and *Perhaps you'll think of me* are on 1156 (2s. 6d.).

The only March Regal in my heap is an irresistible xylophone record by **Victor Stirling**, with first class accompaniment, in C. F. Abbey's *Snatches* and *Danse d'Hesdin* (G.8777, 2s. 6d.). The tunes and the playing of them make this easily the best xylophone record of the month; but there is a peculiar percussion effect at some points in the recording.

The March Brunswicks are, I fancy, the first which I have heard which were all except one pressed in the new British Brunswick factory, and they are worthy of high praise for surface and finish. **Mario Chamlee** sings *My Dreams* and *Parted* as well as, granting his peculiar diction, they are likely to be sung (10230, 4s. 6d.). **Nick Lucas** seems better than ever in *Hello Bluebird* and *I've got the Girl* (3370, 3s.), his own playing of the guitar to Sammy Stept's piano

My favourite song is *Home, Sweet Home*, and my favourite singer Dame Clara Butt. My favourite composer is Ketelbey, and my favourite tune one I heard de Groot play often in the past. At the moment I cannot recall the title, but it is either by Bach or Gounod.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton appears to be trying to be facetious and Mr. Bernard Shaw rude, but Mr. Gilbert Frankau seems a sensible sort of person. Who is Lord Berners?

May I conclude by venturing an opinion on the oft-discussed question whether Britain is a musical nation? It should be pointed out that we are richer than any other nation in domestic ballads of a simple, appealing type. This is apt to be forgotten by the high-brows, though luckily it is remembered by our great virtuosi.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, N.W. 3.

A BRITISH TAXPAYER.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

[Apologies are herewith offered to the correspondents concerned if the blue pencil has foreshortened the perspective of their views. They have themselves partly to blame.—LONDON ED.]

The recent discussion in your columns regarding the exclusion of society reports has tempted me to make a list of the varied contents of THE GRAMOPHONE in the order of their appeal to me.

1. Advertisements giving lists of recordings. 2. Reviews. 3. Editor's reviews. 4. Advertisements. 5. Anything by the Editor. 6. Trade winds and idle zephyrs. 7. Correspondence, notes and queries. 8. Special articles (Scholes, Latham's Wagner). 9. Technical articles. 10. Herman Klein's articles. 11. Book reviews. 12. Society reports.

The above is based entirely on the order in which I read the current issue. It is evident that I judge the contents primarily by an *information on records* standard. The tantalizing question as I open the wrappers of the newest issue is "What has been recorded?" Then, "Is the recording good?" A calmer reading then follows for opinions on the records published previous to the current month. The society reports could easily become as important as the reviews, if they would discuss the best records played at their meetings. How interesting if one could turn to the back of the magazine and get the views of a dozen societies on various records. One writer, the Editor, is read for his ideas, regardless of my interest in the particular subject under discussion. Mr. Herman Klein, in spite of his immense background, does not interest me as I should expect him to. His comments on operatic records in the reviews, of course, are splendid...—Dr. K. E. BRITZINS, Minneapolis.

SUGGESTIONS.

(1) There are several articles, or types of article, that would add to the interest of your journal. The "Auxetophone," invented by the Hon. Charles Parsons, the inventor of the steam turbine, was a serious rival to "direct" music twenty years ago, when the best gramophone was a bad gramophone. What has happened to it? Could the inventor be asked to write about it? It is too readily assumed that electric ways of doing things must be an advance on any other way. In driving machinery, to choose an unfamiliar but convincing instance, steam is still better than electricity. The exhaust steam is necessary for scalding and heating and costs nothing when there is a steam plant but not an electric plant.

(2) By using a parabolic mirror in place of the recording horn, records could be made to rival the electric recordings. The "Acoustic Ear" was greatly improved during the war, to listen for aeroplanes at Dover, for instance. Elementary facts in acoustics are very much neglected by experts. A series of articles on these, with special reference to the gramophone, would be helpful.

(3) Pentagraph Records.—Old recordings, that could not be repeated for some reason, could be improved by copying in the lathe or on a wheel designed for the purpose. The "scoring" could be enlarged and many defects worked out by use of a special "pentagraph."

(4) Telephonograph Long-playing Records. For really long-playing records there is nothing to compete with the electro-magnetic "Telephonograph," except where synchronism is wanted with pictures. This is best known in America, but some of the B.B.C. people could give information.—ADAM BLACK, Perth.

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY NOTES

(All communications should be addressed to The Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.)

The Orchestral Records

Seven new records are now ready for distribution. They are as follows:—

N.G.S. 69, 70, 71.—Corelli's *Concerto for Christmas Night* and Debussy's *Danse Sacrée* and *Danse Profane*.

N.G.S. 72.—Delius's *A Summer Night on the River*.

N.G.S. 73, 74.—Mozart's *Symphony in C major, No. 22* (K.200).

N.G.S. 75.—Peter Warlock's *Serenade for strings* (written for Delius on his sixtieth birthday).

All were recorded by the N.G.S. Chamber Orchestra, as previously described in these notes, and each record is 12-inch double-sided, and should be played at 80 revolutions a minute.

Members who have subscribed for 24 records in the year, under the original scheme, will receive all these seven records, making with the Schubert, Purcell, Beethoven and Brahms records already sent to them, a total of 20 for the season. The remaining four, which will be distributed in July, will contain Ravel's *Quartet in F major*.

Numbering Records

The old method of using letters of the alphabet to distinguish N.G.S. records having grown cumbrous, all the records of the Society have been numbered consecutively, as may be seen in the above list. This system will be shown more clearly in the illustrated catalogue of N.G.S. records, which it is hoped to distribute to members next month.

The Music Society Quartet

This quartet (consisting of André Mangeot and Boris Pecker, violins, Henry J. Berly, viola, and John Barbirolli, cello), which made many records for the Society last year, has recently been re-formed and re-named. The violist is now Frank Howard and the cellist Herbert Withers, the first and second violins remaining unchanged, and the quartet is now called the International String Quartet. It is this combination which is recording the Ravel Quartet and, with Leon Goossens, the Bax Oboe Quintet for the Society.

The Year's Programme

As we have the proposed programme for this year well in hand, and as we have had to cut out the Beethoven *Quartet in F minor*, Op. 95, which has been recorded by the Lener Quartet for Columbia, the Advisory Committee intend to ask Mr. Spencer Dyke to undertake a further work, to be issued between July and October. What shall it be? Schumann and Dvorák are not yet represented in our list; Mendelssohn is clearly coming into favour again. Will members who have views on the subject please write to the Secretary and say which of the following they think most suitable to round off the Society's activities in the third year?

Dvorák's *Piano Quintet in A*, Op. 81.

Mendelssohn's *String Quintet in A*, Op. 18.

Schumann's *String Quartet in F*, Op. 41, No. 2.

Comments

"The records arrived last Saturday in good condition, and I like most of them among the very best so far published... We all particularly like the Goossens and Vaughan-Williams pieces."—A. C. RANKIN.

"What I particularly want to say is that I think the Goossens sonata is absolutely delightful and quite different from any other sonata I have ever heard. I hope the other movements will be recorded soon."—R. W. REVELL.

Members of the N.G.S. and readers of THE GRAMOPHONE can hear any or all the N.G.S. records in the special room lent to the Society for this purpose by Messrs Murdoch, Murdoch and Co., 463 Oxford Street, London, W.1.