



BAND RECORDS

A noticeable and pleasing feature of this month's records as a whole is the improved use and recording of the side drum. In nearly every record this instrument can be heard to advantage, but the record in which the greatest opportunity is offered and taken is that containing Sousa's *Semper Fidelis March* played by the **Coldstream Guards Band** (H.M.V., B.2647). The side drum solo in the middle of this record, and which links up two sections of the march, is very faithfully reproduced. The reverse is occupied by Rimmer's *The Bells of St. Malo*, in which the side drum is again excellent, and the tubular bells are much more in tune than is usually the case.

There is a plethora of good marches this month and a comparison of the styles of and the methods adopted by the different bands is interesting. Thus, as two extremes, we have **Captain Wood and the Scots Guards Band**, who always adhere to strict march tempo, and **Walter B. Rogers and his Band**, who give more or less virtuosic performances even when playing marches. By a coincidence both these bands have elected to play *El Capitan*, by Sousa. There can be no doubt that the performance of the American band is the more attractive in this case. The playing is crisper and cleaner and, moreover, *El Capitan* is a march that is even better as a concert piece than a march pure and simple. The performance of Mr. Rogers is described by the staff of our American cousin, *The Phonograph*, who ought to know, and are well qualified to judge, as "in the true vein in which Sousa plays it as an encore in his concerts." Conversely, *Washington Post*, which occupies the reverse of Brunswick No. 3675A, does not lend itself to temperamental treatment so well and is not as attractive as *Colonel Bogey*, which is on the other side of Winner No. 4636. On the whole, therefore, honours are fairly easy, with the balance tilted in favour of the Brunswick record because of the superior recording. Another record by the **Scots Guards Band**, in which the same strict methods are employed, is Beltona No. 1327, which contains *With Sword and Lance* and *Light of Foot*, two old favourites which have eased many a weary mile.

In between these two extremes are the methods of the **Royal Air Force Band** (Regal No. G.9023). *Sons of Australia* and *Sons of New Zealand* are both good marches, though of the two, the latter is the more tuneful. This record is by far the best that the **Royal Air Force Band** have made under the Regal régime and is in very pleasant contrast to the dreadful record issued last month.

I seem to bewail the secession of the Homochord Company and welcome them back to the fold alternately. It is the turn for the latter, and this time the welcome is extra hearty because *On the Quarter Deck* and Schubert's *Marche Militaire* played by the **Homochord Military Band** (No. D.1213) combine to make an excellent record. Safe, betwixt and between methods are the order with this band also. This record is remarkable for its enormous volume and "punch," and the only criticism I have to offer is that in obtaining this volume the tone has acquired a touch of harmonium-like breathiness. Is this because the microphone was placed too near the band? I think that this is probably the reason, and if so, the sacrifice of little volume would be a good investment.

To turn to the non-martial, though by no means pacific, music, the most important contribution is that of the H.M.V. Company, who issue three recordings or re-recordings by the **Coldstream Guards Band**. They are all excellent, and are made by a bigger band than any of those previously mentioned. An addition to the single-sided selections from the Savoy

operas appears in the shape of excerpts from *Trial by Jury* and *The Sorcerer* respectively (C.1435). This music is as bright and tuneful as that in the better known operas and its comparative unfamiliarity is in itself an attraction.

Many people must have been led to the really good things in music via such things as *Zampa Overture* and *Raymond Overture* played by a good military band. I have therefore always a soft spot in my heart for these and similar popular overtures, hackneyed though they may be. The new record of *Zampa* (C.1421) is double-sided and a splendid piece of work. Equally good playing and recording are displayed in *Raymond* (C.1440), but in this case the music has been cut to make it fit one side of a disc. This is a pity, and doubly so when one finds on the reverse *In a Persian Market*. I have been encouraged to think and hope during the last few months that even the recording companies had unanimously agreed that this effusion had been recorded *ad nauseam*.

Another old war-horse is *Poet and Peasant Overture*, and a ten-inch double-sided record of it played by the **Royal Artillery Band** (Winner No. 4638) may be described as good value for half-a-crown. The playing is a trifle stodgy, and the recording is good though not outstandingly so.

The **Grenadier Guards Band** can be relied on always to give a good and finished performance of anything they play and as the Columbia process of recording is getting more and more capable of dealing effectively with bass notes their records are improving almost monthly. This is exemplified once more in *La Paloma* and *Twist and Twirl* (Col. 4637). In the former the rhythm is unbroken and the castanets excellent. They are not too loud, but very true to life. The latter is a much better piece than the title suggests, in fact, it is quite attractive, and is cleverly constructed.

W. A. C.

MISCELLANEOUS

Records from the February bulletins which I had no chance to mention last month were a very good **Dajos Bela Orchestra** waltz record, *The Girl in the Train* and *Polish Blood* (Parlo. E.10638, 12in., 4s. 6d.) and, perhaps an even more attractive **Orchestra Mascotte** (with **Edith Lorand**) record of the *Eton Boating Song* and *Gold and Silver* waltzes (Parlo. R.3483, 10in., 3s.). This is a new combination which promises well. A re-recording of a *La Bohème Selection* by **De Groot and the Piccadilly Orchestra** (H.M.V. C.1443, 12in., 4s. 6d.) needs no encouragement to become a best seller. **Willard Robison** merely playing blues on a piano (Actuelle 11516, 2s. 6d.) makes one wish that he would sing at the same time. *My Blue Heaven*—one of the most popular tunes at the moment—is played and sung by **Frank Ferera's Hawaiians**, with *Back to Hawaii and me* in their usual manner (Imperial 1842, 1s. 6d.). I must also mention some good bagpipe solos by **Pipe Major William Ross** (Parlo. E.3472, 3473, 2s. 6d. each) and *Grampian* and *Balmoral* by the **Argyle Reel and Strathspey Band** (Parlo. E.10648, 12in., 4s. 6d.) in the Parlophone Scottish supplement. Likewise, those who have a weakness for cornet solos should not miss **Harry Bryan** in *Because* and *Il Bacio* (Homochord D.1212, 2s. 6d.).

Now for some of the mid-February and March records. Some of the light orchestral records seem to have escaped into another reviewer's clutches, but of the others I single out the **A and P Gypsies** in *Dubinuschka* (Horlick), *Old Forgotten Waltz* and *Bouran* (Bruns. 3697, 3s.) as an uncommonly desirable record, with **Albert Sandler** in *Caroli*—our old friend *Ay Ay Ay*, but now attributed to Freire instead of Perez—and a waltz called *Hush-a-Bye* (Col. 4711, 3s.) and **De Groot** in *Souvenir de Capri* and *My beloved Gondolier* (H.M.V. B.2575, 3s.) daintily tied, with pink ribbon, for second place. These are distinctly a pleasant trio. The **J. H. Squire Celeste Octet** has a pretty good twelve-inch record of Weber's

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