

UPLIFTING MOMENTS

Bandmaster Andrew Mackereth, Nuneaton, reviews the latest recording from Enfield Band – *Classically Enfield*

IN this latest in a succession of definitive recordings by Enfield Band, Bandmaster Jonathan Corry brings together a number of transcriptions of classical works arranged for brass band by Salvationist arrangers. The 17 works presented cover the best part of 100 years of Army repertoire and publications.

In the absence of anything else to play, musicians in the earliest days of the brass band movement drew heavily on the classical and operatic traditions. The music was believed to uplift the souls of the common pitmen, whose employers were often the earliest band patrons. Naturally enough, the earliest Salvation Army repertoire for band reflects this and the excellent programme notes of Dr Ronald Holz tell something of the difficulties early-day arrangers faced – including the personal scrutiny of the Founder!

Bandmaster Corry is soundly justified in drawing these pieces to our attention once more. Not, I believe from a sense of dewy-eyed nostalgia, but instead from a well-founded admiration of some truly gifted arrangers, many of whom are otherwise confined to history.

Most of the music will be familiar to Salvationist listeners. In fact, it may be that some of the pieces are so well known I may not be the only

person who grew up thinking they were ‘Army’ all along! Such is the case with ‘Concert Piece For Trombone’, the main concert item from maestro Dudley Bright, performed with customary ease and flair. Dudley contributes two further items in ‘Lend Me Your Aid’ and ‘Sound An Alarm’.

Trumpet soloist Christopher Deacon joins the band to present two excellent solos: ‘Queen Of The Night’s Aria’ on piccolo trumpet and two movements from the Haydn ‘Trumpet Concerto’, transcribed by Andrew Blyth and Ray Steadman-Allen respectively.

Amid what is evidently a well-balanced programme are three substantial works: ‘Overture From *The Magic Flute*’ arranged by Michael Kenyon, ‘Beatrice And Benedict’ arranged by Keith Wilkinson and ‘Themes From The New World Symphony’ arranged by Ray Steadman-Allen. The band is in fine form in every piece, but for me it finds an extra 10 per cent in the ‘New World Symphony’.

We have a rich heritage, only a fraction of which can be celebrated in this way. I thank God for the skill and dedication of Salvationist arrangers who have enabled generations of us to enjoy ‘moments with the masters’, uplifting our souls and glorifying God at the same time.

I only hope Enfield decides to make a second volume; I have a personal list of favourites that didn’t make volume one! ■

■ ***Classically Enfield* is available from SP&S priced £13.95 plus £2.95 postage and packing**

