

Enfield Connections

Enfield Citadel Band of The Salvation Army,

Bandmaster Jonathan Corry

SPS 284 CD

Available from World of Brass, 4barsrest and Midland CD

Enfield Citadel Band has been at the forefront of creative innovation in the Salvationist brass band community for many decades. Under its dynamic, young Bandmaster, Jonathan Corry, the band members are doffing their SA caps, so to speak, to a selection of composers and arrangers who have written for the band or its conductors and also to past members whose work is now a mainstay of the brass band repertoire at large.

Leslie Condon's *The Call of the Righteous* was composed in 1964 for the Tottenham Citadel Band (as it was then) and Bandmaster James Williams to play on its North American tour. Condon created one of the most engaging works in the SA repertoire, elevating the Festival Arrangement, as it is described, onto a higher artistic plane through his creative imagination and technical resource. Corry and the band present a clean, well-measured reading, direct in approach (they do 'forthright' very well under this conductor) with a welcome measure of lyricism to balance. Also well known in the wider band world is Edward Gregson's *Variations on Laudate Dominum*. Gregson played euphonium in the old Tottenham Band (1965-67). He composed the first version in 1976 for his brother Bramwell's band, London Citadel (Canada). In 2007, two further variations

were added - somewhat more demanding to play - for Black Dyke.

Enfield presents the revised version in a spacious interpretation, with excellent 'bottom end' and trombones. While it may lack the finesse of the very best readings, and in variation three a horn counter melody appears to be completely missing, the performance is vibrant and ends well.

Peter Graham's *Ad Optimum* is included here as a tribute to James Williams, who premièred the work at the Star Lake Music Camp (USA) in 1999. Prof. Graham recalls an earlier visit in 1985, and the 'commitment, passion and drama' of Bandmaster Williams' contribution on that occasion, especially his performance of Erik Leidzen's selection *None Other Name*. *Ad Optimum* is a response to that memory, dramatic and soulful by turns. In musical terms, however, it is the other Eric - Ball - that resonates in the music, Ball's *Tone Poem*, *Song of Courage*, in particular. The other major offering, *Turris Fortissima* (Steven Ponsford), was composed for Enfield's 2007 USA tour, since when it has gone round the SA world. It receives an upfront performance characteristic of the band under Jonathan Corry.

The programme also includes a carefully chosen selection of shorter arrangements and treatments - including *Battle Ready* (Trigg), *Prayer Gently Lifts me* (Chelsea Pascoe), *The Veterans* (Steadman-Allen) and *Wondrous Cross* (Wilby) - plus some fine solo contributions (Andrew Justice, trombone, is outstanding). The programme notes are informative and the church acoustic is resonant but without an undue loss of clarity.

Paul Hindmarsh

