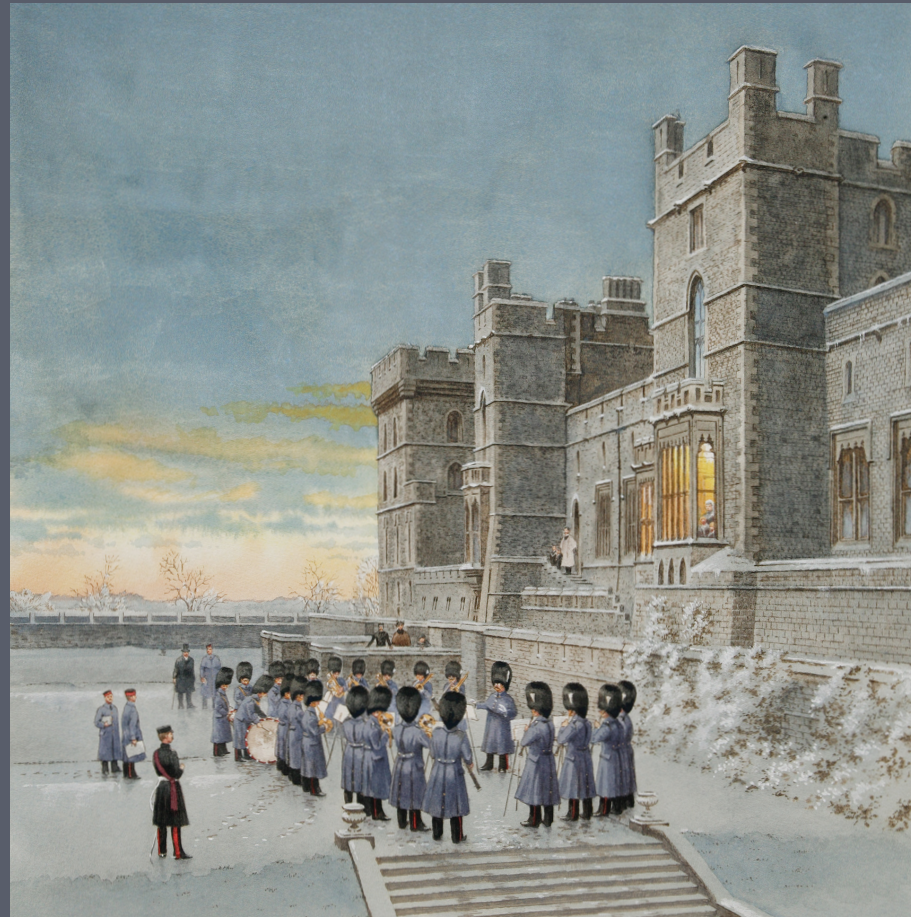


MERRIE ENGLAND

THE BAND OF THE GRENADIER GUARDS



DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: LIEUTENANT-COLONEL G.J. MILLER, MVO, MBE
REMASTERED HISTORICAL RECORDINGS 1923-1934



1. MERRIE ENGLAND

(SIR EDWARD GERMAN) 27th June 1927

2. SAVOY HUNTING MEDLEY

(ARR. DEBROY SOMERS) 12th March 1934

3. LO! HERE THE GENTLE LARK

(SIR HENRY BISHOP) 25th January 1929

4. W.H. SQUIRE'S POPULAR SONGS

(WILLIAM HENRY SQUIRE) 17th September 1926

5. ETON MEMORIES

(ARR. A.M. GOODHART) 1st March 1934

6. A PRINCESS OF KENSINGTON

(SIR EDWARD GERMAN) 27th June 1927

7. SONGS OF THE SEA

26th November 1931

8. THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

(JOHN GAY) 19th March 1923

9. THE ROSE - ENGLISH SELECTION

(ARR. WILLIAM HENRY MYDDLETON) 11th April 1927

10. POST HORN GALOP

(HERMANN KOENIG) 27th November 1930

11. TOM JONES

(SIR EDWARD GERMAN) 22nd June 1927

THE GRENADIER GUARDS

The Grenadier Guards was raised in Bruges as a bodyguard to King Charles II while he was in exile, and moved to England after the Restoration of the British monarchy in 1661 following the brief flirtation with parliamentary rule under Oliver Cromwell. The regimental band traces its history back to a warrant signed by the King in 1685 authorising its formation, and can therefore claim to have been 'born' in the same year as Bach and Handel. The band was formally established as a military band in 1785, and has been in continuous existence ever since, making it one of the world's longest serving bands.

The band went to Paris in 1815 as part of the victory celebrations after the Battle of Waterloo and it is believed that three musicians from the regiment had earlier accompanied King William III on a visit to the Netherlands. In 1872 the band sailed to Boston in the United States to be part of an International Peace Jubilee, the first of numerous visits to the continent and one that was sanctioned only after a debate in Parliament.

The Bandmaster at the time was Dan Godfrey, appointed to the position in 1856 at the age of just 25, one of a dynasty who dominated the Guards bands for the latter part of the century. He served in that role for 40 years and was a great favourite of Queen Victoria, who personally granted him a commission as part of Her Golden Jubilee honours in 1887.

Lieutenant Godfrey was succeeded by Captain Albert Williams, a cultured musician who obtained his Doctor of Music degree from Oxford University while with the Grenadiers and he was, in turn, followed by Lieutenant Colonel George Miller. During Miller's time the band made hundreds of 78rpm recordings in a wide variety of styles, which are a great testament to the quality of the band during the 1920s and 30s.

During the First World War the Guards bands did much to help recruitment and morale at home and took turns for three-month tours to France and Belgium to play for the soldiers serving at the front.

Post World War Two one of the musicians to serve in the band was Colour Sergeant Karl Schauenberg, a German who joined the band in the 1960s and who had been awarded an Iron Cross during his time with the Hitler Youth in the Second World War. It is said that he wore this medal when on parade, hidden under his sash! It is now displayed in the Guards Museum in London.

Between 1970 and 1976 the band was directed by Major Peter Parkes who went on to enjoy an equally successful career in the brass band world including a long period as conductor of the Black Dyke Mills Band, winning numerous prizes and making him the most successful brass band conductor of his era. The modern band consists of forty-six musicians, including a Major Director of Music and can be seen and heard in London carrying out their public duties and state ceremonial.

MERRIE ENGLAND

The title Merrie England nicely brings together the main themes of this recording, the music of Sir Edward German and some traditional music of England. Edward German (originally German Edward Jones) was born in Whitchurch in Shropshire in 1862 and was to become one of England's finest composers of light operetta, second only to Sir Arthur Sullivan. Merrie England was written in 1902 with libretto by Basil Hood and is set in the days of Queen Elizabeth I, who ruled England from 1558 until 1603. It includes songs such as Dan Cupid Hath a Garden (The Perfect English Rose), The Yeomen of England and Robin Hood's Wedding.

The Savoy Hunting Medley brings together tunes associated with that very British activity of foxhunting, introduced by the post horn and including A Hunting We Will Go, The Lincolnshire Poacher, Drink Puppy Drink, Down Among the Dead Men and John Peel. The arranger, Debroy Somers, was a well-known band leader of the 1920s and 30s.

Lo! Here the Gentle Lark was composed in 1819 by Sir Henry Bishop (1786-1855) for coloratura soprano with flute obbligato, using words from William Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors. It was recorded by Dame Nellie Melba in 1910 and more recently by Dame Joan Sutherland and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. However, on this recording the soprano is replaced by the clarinet of Sergeant B. Matthews, with the flute played by Musician C.E. Bowen.

William Henry Squire (1871-1963) was professor of cello at the Royal College of Music and composed extensively for his instrument, as well as writing the music for these Popular Songs.

Eton College, situated close to Windsor Castle, was founded in 1440 by King Henry VI and is England's premier public school, having educated 19 British Prime Ministers and much of its aristocracy. The Eton Memories included in this selection are all songs associated with the school: Rule, Britannia!, Carmen Etonense, The Vale, Eton Boating Song, Salve Regina, When Four Hundred More and Fifty Years, The School at War and The Reign of Reigns.

A Princess of Kensington was another light opera collaboration of Edward German and Basil Hood, first performed at the Savoy Theatre in London on 22nd January 1903.

The sea has protected Great Britain from hostile invasion since 1066, and the nation has long been proud of its seafaring heritage and its principal naval bases in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham. Sailors have always sung to help pass the long months away at sea, and this selection of Songs of the Sea features: The Mermaid, Heave Away My Johnnie, Admiral Benbow, Heart of Oak, Bay of Biscay, Coast of High Barbary, Farewell You Spanish Ladies and (again), Rule, Britannia!

The Beggar's Opera by John Gay dates from 1728 and enjoyed a notable revival in 1920. Many of the melodies are taken from popular ballads, folk tunes and the opera, and this selection for military band includes the popular soldiers' song of its day Over the Hills and Far Away and the March from Handel's opera Rinaldo.

The Rose has long been the symbol of England. A series of wars were fought for the English crown in the 15th century between the House of York (represented by a white rose) and the House of Lancaster (a red rose). The Lancastrian, Henry Tudor, emerged as the victor but his marriage to Elizabeth of York united the warring factions, and the red and white roses were merged as the Tudor rose. W.H. Myddleton

arranged this selection of popular traditional English tunes which includes: Here's a Health unto His Majesty, A Fine Old English Gentleman, Cherry Ripe, The Lass of Richmond Hill, Isle of Beauty, Old Towler, Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes, Haste to the Wedding, Sir Roger de Coverley and The Farmer's Boy.

Slightly out of keeping with the theme of this album, Hermann Koenig (1815-1870) was born in Germany but lived and became well-known in London as a featured soloist in Louis Jullien's orchestra. His Post Horn Galop was composed in 1844 and has become one of the most popular solos in the whole military band repertoire, here demonstrating the skills of Corporal West. It represents another important aspect of England's heritage, the mail coach, with the post horn sounded by one of the coachmen to announce its arrival.

The album ends with the third of the Edward German selections, which comes from the 1907 comic opera based on a novel written by Henry Fielding in 1749 telling the story of a foundling named Tom Jones.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

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THE ARTWORK

Queen Victoria enjoys the Guards playing at Christmas, Windsor, 1880

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