

In Concert with the University of Illinois Symphonic Band  
The Begian Years • Vol. II

Music from Percy Grainger [from record #74]

1. THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH FANFARE .....(2:35)
2. THE IMMOVABLE DO.....(4:27)
3. THE POWER OF ROME & THE CHRISTIAN HEART.....(13:24)
4. COUNTRY GARDENS.....(2:02)
5. YE BANKS AND BRAES O'BONNIE DOON .....(2:19)
6. HANDEL IN THE STRAND .....(3:47)
7. SPOON RIVER.....(4:16)
8. HILL SONG No.2.....(5:36)
9. FESTIVE OVERTURE [from record #109A].....Dimitri Shostakovich / Hunsberger (6:27)
10. THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA [from record #85].....Richard Strauss / Hindsley (30:55)

- PROGRAM NOTES -

**1. DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH FANFARE**

This evocative piece, so different from most fanfares, perfectly typifies Grainger's compositional personality. Simple but sophisticated, it is scored for full brass with optional parts for bassoons and saxophones (not used in this recording). The opening horn solo is here performed by eight players in unison. The second section of this work treats the original material played by the horns fugally with the entire brass section.

**2. THE IMMOVABLE DO**

The title of this unique composition refers to the fact that the woodwinds opening "C" ("do" in "fixed-do" solfeggio) persists as a high pedal point throughout the piece. The pun of the title thus contrasts the "Immovability" of the pedal point with the fact that in "movable-do" solfeggio "do" is always the tonic note of the music—in this case "F." Another example of what Grainger called "elastic scoring," this work is playable by many different combinations of instruments through the use of an ingenious system of cross-cueing. The dedication is also characteristic: "For my merry wife."

**3. THE POWER OF ROME AND THE CHRISTIAN HEART**

Though he was accustomed to calling for large ensembles in his music, Grainger outdid himself in his final original work for band, scoring for "full military band" plus pipe or electric organ and optional string orchestra. In addition, there are important parts for harps, pianos, and "tuneful percussion," and while these instruments are marked "at will" (optional) in the score, the composer indicated in a note: "The more the better." Commissioned In 1948 by the League of Composers for Edwin Franko Goldman's 70th birthday, the work is strikingly theatrical and individual. Grainger

- THE MARK RECORDS COMPACT DISC PROJECT -

In order to preserve and make permanent the artistic accomplishments of Dr. Harry Begian at the University of Illinois, Mark Custom Recording Service, Inc. is producing a limited number of compact disc recordings. Compact discs such as this one have been remastered from the original University of Illinois tape recordings made between 1970 and 1984. Works which have been included on this compact disc were selected personally by Dr. Begian. This project was undertaken by Mark Records as a tribute to Dr. Harry Begian and the memory of Vincent S. Morette and his great admiration of Dr. Begian. Many of the older Master Tapes in the recording industry have under gone a chemical change between the acetate and the polyester substrait binding that holds them together. To keep the original integrity and historical perspective, the compact discs in this series have not been altered to compensate for these changes.



- CREDITS -

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Executive Producer - Mark J. Morette

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Special Thanks to the many people who have made this recording possible -

Vincent S. Morette - founder of Mark Recording

Cecelia M. Morette - current owner and steady influence

Dr. Harry Begian - his talents, personality and total commitment to quality is unsurpassed.

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harbored deep feelings against what he termed "the Roman Empire conception of life (a privileged few catered to by a host of slaves)," which he felt had spread "from Rome to France, from France to England, and from England to America." He saw himself on the side of the Nordic races, oppressed by an alien and hostile culture. These ideas are reflected in his footnote to the title of the piece: "The unfoldment of musical feelings started by thoughts of the agony of individual Souls in conflict with The-Powers-That-Be - as when the Early Christians found themselves at strife with the Powers of Ancient Rome."

#### 4. COUNTRY GARDENS

Despite his wide fame as a piano virtuoso, Grainger did not like performing and viewed it as a necessary evil - something he had to do to make a living. He even came to dislike the instrument itself, because playing it took time away from composition. Thus he was well pleased to be able to enlist in the U.S. Army as a bandsman, playing saxophone and oboe. Unluckily, his presence at Fort Hamilton was revealed by a newspaper reporter, and he was pressed into service as piano soloist in campaigns to raise money for war bonds. Casting about for a tune to use as a basis for improvisations, he came upon "Country Gardens," an old morris dance like "Shepherd's Hey." "It was immensely popular, and eventually became one of Grainger's most profitable publications. The arrangement for band was made by Tom Clark.

#### 5. YE BANKS AND BRAES O'BONNIE DOON

This warmly-scored Scottish folksong is an example of Grainger's innovations in band arranging. Through careful voicing, doubling, and balancing of melody and accompaniment parts, Grainger produced an arrangement that can be performed successfully by a number of ensembles smaller than full band. These chamber groupings include full woodwind choir, double-reed choir, clarinet choir, saxophone choir, full brass choir, and narrow-bore brass choir"(?) of cornets and trombones.

#### 6. HANDEL IN THE STRAND

The following note by the composer appears in the published score: "My title was originally *Clog Dance*. But my dear friend William Gair Rathbone (to whom the piece is dedicated) suggested the title handel in the Strand because the music seemed to reflect both Handel and English musical comedy (the 'Strand' - a street in London—is the home of London musical comedy) - as if jovial old Handel were careering down the Strand to the strains of modern English popular music." The band arrangement is by Richard Franko Goldman, noted conductor, scholar, and teacher.

#### 7. SPOON RIVER

"A Captain Charles H. Robinson heard a tune called 'Spoon River' played by a rustic fiddler at a country dance at Bradford, Illinois (U.S.A.) in 1857. When Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*' appeared in 1914, Captain Robinson (then nearly 90 years old) was struck by the likeness of the two titles . . . and he sent the 'Spoon River' tune to Masters, who passed it on to me. The tune is very archaic in character, typically American, yet akin to certain Scottish and English dance-tune types. My setting . . . aims at preserving a pioneer blend of lonesome wistfulness and sturdy persistence. It bears the following dedication: 'For Edgar Lee Masters, poet of pioneers.' "- Percy Aldridge Grainger. The sensitive band setting by Glenn Cliffe Bainum captures the flavor of Grainger's style,

particularly with its important parts for mallet percussion.

## 8. HILL SONG No. 2

Originally scored for the winds of a symphony orchestra, this piece is now most often played by larger ensembles. It is based upon material drawn from the first Hill Song, which was written in 1902 as "an exploration of musically hilly ways, a gathering of types for future hill songs, A Catalogue." Writing about the structure he used in the Hill Songs; Grainger stated that "... there is no premeditated repetition or development of thematic material, the underlying formal idea being to keep the musical inventivity throughout at the white heat of thematic creation and to spread it evenly over the entire length of the piece and over its minor textural details alike... as if the whole composition, from first to last, were one unbroken theme." The sweep of the piece, the manner in which it lives up to its marking of "Fierce and keen, at fast walking speed," attest to Grainger's success in this musical ambition. In his book, *The Wind Band*, Richard Franko Goldman nominates the two Hill Songs and *Lads of Wamphray* as the first major 20th century pieces for band; but, because of the delay in their publication (35 years in the case of the march), the two famous suites by Holst became the earliest established standards of the band repertory.

## 9. FESTIVE OVERTURE, Op. 6

Dimitri Shostakovich, arr. Hunsberger

Originally written in 1954 for a large orchestra and brass choir, the great Russian composer Shostakovich arranged his own orchestral composition for the Russian Military Band. The setting for the American concert band was written by Donald Hunsberger in 1965. It quickly became a popular "opener or curtain raiser" for high school and university bands. This work was written in the later part of his life and his reminiscent of the Romanticized style found in his fifth Symphony despite being written after his Symphony #10.

## 10. THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA

Richard Strauss, arr. Hindsley

Strauss' magnificent tone poem begins with a nature mood depicting the sublimeness of sunrise. The theme radiates in a mighty climb always becoming brighter until the climax of sunrise is reached. The individual, interrelated sections which follow have these designations: Of the Unworldly (inhabitants of the unseen world) . Of Great Longing; or Joy and Passion; Dirge (grave-song); Of Science; The Convalescent; The Dance-song; and The Night Wanderer's Song. These do not add up to a work based on a definite program; we have here a series of reflections-in-sound of ideas which emanated from Strauss' reading of Nietzsche's tomes of philosophic prose. There are, nevertheless, definite links between the music and the programmatic titles, such as the plainsong Credo theme in the section concerning the "unworldly," and the contrapuntal texture in the section on "science," whose fugue subject is made up of all twelve chromatic semitones, and thus symbolizes the all-embracing scope of science. The work is based harmonically on fluctuations between C and B, sometimes with no clear distinction between major and minor. The scant but bold motives of the introduction constantly act as germs for new melodic developments, which reach their dithyrambic climax in an orgiastic "dance-song." The changing chords which ebb away in the finale also feature the semitone of the introduction, and this is fundamental to the entire work, which is bracketed by the pedal point on C at the beginning and the B major tonality at the end. The final "night wanderer's song" is ushered in with a heavy stroke of the bell, repeated for a total of twelve times, gradually dying away to the softest pianissimo, punctuating Nietzsche's text - the essence of which is that human joys desperately want to prolong themselves into eternity.

## - PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER -

Carrying a portable phonograph, and a supply of wax cylinders, the young Australian-born composer entered the town of Goxhill, England. Dressed in worn khaki clothing and army boots, with a bright bush of orange hair brushed over his ears, the lad seemingly had walked quite a distance, for his appearance was rather disarrayed, and the constable eyed him as a possible vagrant.

Stating that he was in search of songs, he summoned all of those who knew a tune to sing for him, be they farmer, sailor, peddler, or peasant. But upon hearing that a man named Gouldthorpe was the current repository of an ancient tune, the young man rushed off to search him out.

Finding "the gaunt sharp-cornered" old man, the lad asked, "Do you know a song called 'Horkstow Grange?' If you do come out and sing it for me." After a bit more coaxing the old man nodded, and in a voice somewhat grating, sang out his version of the tender folk song.

Percy Grainger - pianist, composer, conductor, philologist, author, inventor, linguist, traveler, ethnomusicologist, vegetarian, athlete, and collector of musical curiosities and folk songs, was one of the most colorful characters and original thinkers of the twentieth century. Though occasionally arrested for vagrancy, and often the object of dog bites, his ability as a concert pianist left him few equals, and his special talents at arranging folk tunes made him one of the most popular performers of his time.

He was born George Percy Grainger in Brighton, Australia, in 1881, the son of a government architect and civil engineer. Later, unimpressed with the name George, he dropped it, and adopted as his middle name, Aldridge, his mothers maiden name.

At a young age Grainger displayed an interest in nearly all of the arts, but it was his mother's wish that he become a musician. She started her young son on piano, and it was soon apparent that Percy had a natural talent for the instrument. He was able to improvise endlessly, and by the age of six began to compose his own pieces. At the age of ten, after five years of study with his mother, Grainger became the student of Louis Pabst at the Melbourne Conservatory, where he gave his first public recital. By twelve the youth had achieved sufficient funds and notoriety to permit study in Frankfurt.

It was the hope of Rose Grainger that her son could study with Clara Schumann. Unfortunately, Mme. Schumann died shortly after Grainger's arrival in Europe in 1896. But by this time young Grainger's ambitions had turned toward composition. As he grew older the conflict between the desire to compose and his financial need to perform developed within him an intense hatred of the piano, and everything about it, except as a place to store used laundry. Several times he publicly stated his disapproval at being forced to perform in order to secure income.

He found public appearances distasteful, and conducted his recitals in a very informal manner, never hesitating to stop in the midst of a piece to tell a story. He was once quoted by the "New Yorker" magazine as saying, "For what possible reason should one be limited to what he can hit with ten fingers."

In his exasperation at the limitations of the instrument and what he considered his "incredibly maladroit" technique, he wrote an organ piece (later transcribed for voices, and later still for winds) entitled The Immovable Do, in which the performer must fasten two keys down with pencils; creating a continuous drone, and leaving the ten fingers free to play elsewhere. Pursuing this idea Grainger also contrived a piece that required the person to lean over the keyboard and use his nose now and again.

Prior to the turn of the century, Grainger had little success with composition. None of his early works were published, and many remained unfinished. Reluctantly, Grainger began his career as a concert pianist in Germany in 1900, and soon after moved to London.

His striking appearance - bushy orange hair, and a baggy dress suit, which he never wore off stage for fear people would think him eccentric - made him one of the stage's most rewarding sights, and his youthful manner insured him instant success.

These early years in England were active ones for Grainger. He made extensive tours of the Continent, the British Isles, New Zealand Australia and other British Commonwealths. Whenever possible he preferred to hike to his engagements. Once, while touring South Africa, Grainger announced that he would walk to his next performance, and quickly disappeared into the bush. Just before curtain time the next day, a party of Zulu tribesmen were seen on the horizon, with Grainger, slightly scratched, ankling behind. On one occasion he covered over sixty-five miles in a single day.

Composition also occupied a great deal of Grainger's time during this period. While studying in Frankfurt with Ivan Knorr, Grainger had become associated with a group of young English composers including: Balfour Gardner, Roger Quilter, and Cyril Scott. The "Frankfurt Group" had a lasting impression on Grainger as many of the compositional ideas which he developed later in life date from these younger years. In a letter to John Tasker Howard, Grainger wrote: "Ever since I was about ten or eleven years old, I have heard in my imagination what I call 'free music'—music that is not tied down to the slavery of scales, intervals, rhythm, or harmony, but in which tones dart, glide, pitch, and changes of tone strength can occur with the smooth gradualness we see in nature."

(In 1944 Grainger, along with Burnett Cross, patented a machine capable of producing electronic "free" music through the use of audio oscillators and synchronizing equipment.)

During these early years in Britain, Grainger also became deeply involved in collecting and arranging folk songs, partly to take his mind off of his "horrible success" as a concert pianist. His interest in folk music was greatly enhanced as a result of his meeting with the Scandinavian composer Edvard Grieg in 1906. The two men instantly became close friends, and they held long discussions concerning the need for preserving folk music.

Credit is often given to Grieg for instilling his love of folk music in Grainger, but the responsibility for his original interest must be given in part to Herman Sandby, the Danish composer and cellist. Grainger's ideas on folk tune arrangements had already borne fruit by the time he met with Grieg. This was partially due to Grainger's exposure to Danish folk music through Sandby, around the turn of the century. Faroe Island Dance is a surviving example of Grainger's love for Danish folk tunes.

One year before his meeting with Grieg, Grainger had become a member of the English Folk Song Society. In that same year, four songs, which he had collected in Lincolnshire with the use of a portable phonograph and wax recording cylinders, were published in the journal of that society. Grainger prefaced these songs with articles on his collecting techniques, folk song scales, rhythms, ornaments, and other irregularities.

Grainger had very strong ideas about folk songs and their notation, and he recognized the importance of the folk-singer's own contribution to the music.

Folk song, by and large, is narrative song . . . It seems to me a great mistake to arbitrarily construct out of the different ways a singer sings the different verses of a narrative song, a so-called "normal" version of the tune, and to adhere to it strictly throughout the whole song. No folk-singer would do anything so poverty stricken.

Free music and folk tunes—these two distinct compositional styles occupied Grainger's interests for his entire career, and they separated his works into two categories. One style can be seen in Grainger's attempts to develop his ideas concerning harmony, free rhythms, and gliding intervals. Works in this category include the *Love Verses from the Song of Solomon*, *Piece for String Quartet*, and to a lesser extent the *Hill Songs*, and *Lincolnshire Pops*. The other style is apparent in his settings of folk songs and dances such as *Irish Tune from County Derry*, *Spoon River*, *Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon*, and many more.

### A Wamphray lad's the king of men.

The directions in most composer's scores read a very proper Italian or German, but in Grainger's they speak English. The pages are filled with exclamations and warnings such as: "louden lots," "quicken bit by bit," and "to the fore." Occasionally a comment, which could not find room anywhere else, flies out into the margin, where it is surrounded by a balloon-shaped diagram, likening the score to a comic strip. Because of this rather unacademic approach to music many people, including most publishers, dismissed Grainger and his works as something not worthy of being taken seriously. For that reason it is not until 1918 that Grainger had any success in getting his compositions published.

*Colonial Song*, originally a piano piece, was scored for winds while Grainger was serving in the military, and was one of his first band works to be published. In the piece Grainger showed his admiration for the music of Stephen Foster as he attempted to express the feelings aroused by the people and the scenery of his native country. Although no folk material was used, the influence of the song *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen* is apparent in the opening measures.

Also completed and published during Grainger's army career was the *Children's March: Over the Hills and Far Away*. Once again, as in the *Hill Songs*, Grainger's love for the double reeds and saxophones is apparent. For the first time though, he has scored the lower reeds as a balancing force against a full brass section - at the time, an innovation in wind orchestration.

*The Children's March* is also an excellent example of Grainger's fascination with percussion instruments and unusual musical sounds. He explored the full reaches of the percussion section just as he did with the woodwind and brass families, making it an equal voice in the band sonority. He was particularly intrigued with the keyboard or "tuneful" percussion instruments, with almost every one of his works containing a part for bells, hammerwood (xylophone), chimes, marimba, and/or metal marimba (vibraphone). His most extensive use of percussion appeared in 1916 with the *In a Nutshell Suite*, scored for orchestra, piano, and Deagan percussion instruments.

Another characteristic of Grainger's scoring is the frequent use of piano, organ, celeste, and harmonium as an integral part of the piece. Often these instruments may simply double the melody, or punctuate chords, as in the *Children's March*, or they are given solo lines which stand above the wind accompaniment, as in *Spoon River*.

*The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart*, Grainger's last original band work, was his largest scoring, calling for piano, organ, celeste, and full percussion. The piece was commissioned by the League of Composers in 1948 for the seventieth birthday of Edwin Franko Goldman. According to Grainger the music attempts to express "the unfoldment of musical feelings started by thoughts of the agony of individual Souls in conflict with *The Powers That Be* - as when the early Christians found themselves at strife with the Power of Ancient Rome."

Though Grainger's original works were, for the most part, well received, his popularity as a composer rested upon his settings of folk songs and dances. Altogether Grainger scored twelve folk tunes, drawn from various sources, for winds, with *Irish Tune from County Derry* being one of the first.

In each arrangement the folk song is presented in the exact manner in which Grainger recorded it, and it remains unaltered throughout. In setting such dance folk songs Grainger felt "that the unbroken and somewhat monotonous keeping-on-ness of the original should be preserved above all else." Contrast is achieved by changing the surroundings in which the tune is placed. This is accomplished by varying the harmony, changing the orchestration, the addition of counter-melodies, etc. Examples of this can be seen in Grainger's arrangements of the old morris dances *Shepherd's Hey*, *Molly on the Shore*, and *Let's Dance Gay in Green Meadow*.

Another of Grainger's folk song settings is *Handel in the Strand*, dedicated to his dear friend William Gair Rathbone. Originally titled "Clog Dance," Rathbone suggested the title be changed because the music seemed to reflect both Handel



and English musical comedy, "as if jovial old Handel were careering down the Strand (a street in London and the home of English musical comedy) to the strains of modern English popular music."

One of the most popular of Grainger's arrangements was *Spoon River*. Grainger recounts the history of the song in the notes of the score:

A Captain Charles H. Robinson heard a tune called "Spoon River" played by a rustic fiddler at a country dance at Bradford, Illinois, in 1857.

When Edgar Lee Masters' "Spoon River Anthology" appeared in 1914 Robinson, then nearly ninety, was struck by the likeness of the two titles and he sent the tune to Masters, who passed it on to me.

My setting, completed in 1929, aims at presenting an American pioneer blend of lonesome wistfulness and sturdy persistence.

*Lincolnshire Posy* stands as Grainger's most outstanding work, and it has become a classic in band literature. In the setting of the six folk songs collected in Lincolnshire, England, in 1905, Grainger combined his ideas on the presenting of folk music with his life long ambition of creating "free music" and in doing so set Lincolnshire Posy apart from his other original works and many light-hearted arrangements.

Grainger describes the work as a "bunch of 'musical wildflowers' - dedicated to the old folksingers who sang so sweetly to me. Indeed, each number is intended to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody—a musical portrait of the singer's personality no less than of his habits of song."

In its six movements, titled and subtitled: "Lisbon" (Sailor's Song), "Horkstow Grange" (The Miser and his Man—a local Tragedy), "Rufford Park Poachers" (Poaching Song), "The Brisk Young Sailor" (who returned to wed his True Love), "Lord Melbourne" (War Song), and "The Lost Lady Found" (Dance Song), all of Grainger's musical ideas are brought together. His determination at presenting the original and capturing the singer's contribution, his love of the reeds, and their nasal tone, his desire to write music free of rhythmic pulse, and rigid intervallic structure; his breaking with conventional harmony; his abandoning of tutti scoring for his concern over development of polyphonic textures his fascination for tuneful percussion - Lincolnshire Posy stands not only as a portrait of the "rural warblers" from whom the songs were gathered, but as a portrait of Percy Grainger himself.

*Contributing sources for biographical sketch and program notes:*

\*\*Slattery, Thomas. "The Wind Music of Percy Aldridge Grainger."

Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967.

Hughes, Charles W. "Percy Grainger Cosmopolitan Composer." *The Musical Quarterly*, April, 1937, pp. 127-136.

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pp. 32-39, February 14, 1948, pp. 32-43.

Biographical Note by William T. Jastrow

- DR. HARRY BEGIAN -

Conductor and Director Emeritus, University of Illinois Bands

Dr. Harry Begian is one of the world's most renowned band conductors. He was Director of Bands at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign from 1970 to 1984. Prior to that appointment he was Director of Bands at Michigan State University for three years and at Wayne State University for the previous three years. Dr. Begian's work at both M.S.U. and W.S.U. carried forward the reputation he earned during his many years at Detroit's Cass Technical High School where he developed one of the finest high school bands in the country. In addition to his band conducting duties, during his last few years at Cass Tech, Begian headed the Music and Performing Arts Departments.

Begian's early musical training was in the Detroit area where he studied trumpet with Leonard Smith and flute with Larry Teal. He received undergraduate and masters degrees at Wayne State University and a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

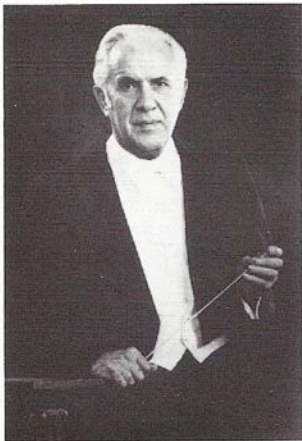
Begian organized and conducted his first band and orchestra while in his teens and has studied conducting at Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared as guest-conductor, clinician and lecturer throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. Along with his band conducting activities, he has also conducted operatic and musical comedy performances, community bands and orchestras, and a church choir. In 1987, the musicians of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra invited Dr. Begian to conduct a formal concert in Detroit's Orchestra Hall.

A charter member of the American School Band Directors Association, he is also a past-president of the American Bandmasters Association and a member of the College Band Directors National Association. An honorary member of the National Band Association and Phi Beta Mu Band Fraternity. Begian is also is a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Phi Delta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa.

Most recently he was conferred honorary memberships in Kappa Kappa Psi and Tau Beta Sigma.

Dr. Harry Begian is a recipient of the National Band Association's Citation of Excellence, the Edwin Franko Goldman Award, the Notre Dame St. Cecelia Award and was elected to the Academy of Wind and Percussion Arts. His more than 50 record albums produced with the University of Illinois Symphonic Band comprise, what has been called "the most distinguished and complete collection of recorded lband performances in existence."

After a year of retirement, Begian returned to the podium for two years as conductor of the Purdue University Symphonic Band from 1985 - 1987. He is presently active as guest-conductor, clinician, adjudicator and lecturer with over 20 engagements a year, is a Consulting Editor to The Instrumentalist magazine and serves on the Board of Directors of the Mid-West International Band and Orchestra Clinic.



## - THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS BAND -

In the 1920's, John Philip Sousa called it the "World's Greatest College Band." During separate guest conducting appearances in the 1950's, Edwin Franko Goldman acclaimed it "second to none," and the "finest of all concert bands."

More recently, many of the country's most prominent composers and conductors have written in terms such as these:

"I have never heard such professional playing and sheer musicianship from any band"

"I have never heard any band, professional or otherwise, that has the warmth of tone and brilliance of sound that the Concert Band has."

"I know of no other band that could have played so much difficult music so well."

"One can easily see why the University of Illinois Bands continue to lead the nation in cultural attainment."

Shortly after the University of Illinois opened in 1868, a military band was organized. The military band became also a concert band and gave its first formal concert in 1890. Beginning in 1906, the University of Illinois Bands were guided to a position of eminence by Albert Austin Harding, universally regarded as "the father of the college band." Mark Hindsley, who had come to the University in 1934 as principal assistant, became Director of Bands in 1948 upon the retirement of Mr. Harding. It was during Mr. Hindsley's tenure that the University of Illinois Band Building was planned, constructed and dedicated to Mr. Harding. It is Mr. Hindsley who receives credit for initiating the far-sighted project of producing long playing disc recordings of the University of Illinois Concert Band.

Without question, Mr. Harding and Mr. Hindsley were pioneers in the college band field, both as conductors and as arrangers. Both conductors produced numerous transcriptions of orchestral repertoire for performance by the Illinois Band greatly enriching the amount of quality music available for band performance. Upon the retirement of Mr. Hindsley in 1970, Dr. Harry Begian was appointed Director of Bands, only the third person ever to serve in that position.

During Dr. Begian's tenure at Illinois, the Symphonic Band performed virtually every work of substance in the concert band repertoire including original compositions, transcriptions and marches. Dr. Begian greatly enjoyed conducting the transcriptions of Mr. Harding and Mr. Hindsley, continuing the grand legacy of the Illinois Band. Further, Dr. Begian championed the music of Percy Grainger, producing a landmark two-album set of Grainger's works. Among transcribed literature, Begian is perhaps best known for his interpretive genius with the tone poems of Richard Strauss. Among original band literature, Begian's name is inseparably linked with the *Armenian Dances, Part I and II* of Alfred Reed which were composed for and dedicated to him. Additionally, Dr. Begian's career at Illinois demonstrated a devotion to march music which was second to none. Producing several march albums, Begian demonstrated interpretive possibilities to the band world which have long been admired and imitated.

In 1985, after the retirement of Dr. Begian, Mr. James Keene was appointed as the fourth Director of Bands in the history of the University of Illinois. Before coming to Illinois, Mr. Keene served for five years as director of Bands at the University of Arizona during which his bands received national recognition and acclaim through their concert tours and convention performances. Previous to his appointment at Arizona, Mr. Keene taught at East Texas State University, the University of South Carolina, Louisiana Tech University and the University of Michigan. At the University of Illinois, the Symphonic Band has continued to flourish under the leadership of Mr. Keene with frequent performances throughout the country at the most prestigious conferences and conventions.