

**In Concert with the  
University of Illinois Symphonic Band  
The Begian Years \* Vol. VII**

- 1-3. Symphony in B-Flat for  
    Concert Band ..... P. Hindemith
- 4-13. Variations on a  
    Theme by Haydn ..... J. Brahms/M. Hindsley
14. Lohengrin..... R. Wagner/M. Hindsley
15. Theme and Variations, Op. 43a ..... A. Schoenberg
16. The Beautiful Galatea ..... F. von Suppé/  
    L.P. Laurenduau
17. Ballad for Band..... M. Gould
18. Beatrice & Benedict ..... H. Berlioz/F. Henning

## The Begian Years, Volume VII

**Arnold Schoenberg** (1874-1951) wrote his only composition for band, *Theme and Variations, Opus 43a*, in 1943. He composed the piece at the suggestion of his friend, Carl Engel, president of the music publisher G. Schirmer, Inc., New York. His primary aim was to offer amateur wind bands a composition of an artistic nature, replacing the sometimes dubious arrangements associated with band repertoire.

Although Schoenberg's 12-tone theory of serial music had already been developed and utilized in many of his works, *Theme and Variations* is a tonal work based in G minor with a theme, seven variations, and a finale.

Schoenberg, commenting on the piece, stated:

This is not one of my main works, as everybody can see, because it is not a composition with twelve tones. It is one of those compositions which one writes in order to enjoy one's own virtuosity and, on the other hand, to give a certain group of music lovers - here it is the bands - something better to play. I can assure you - and I can prove - technically this is a masterwork. And I believe it is also original, and I know it is also inspired. Not only can I not write ten measures without inspiration, but I wrote this with really great pleasure.

When the *Theme and Variations* was judged to be beyond the grasp of most school bands, Schoenberg reversed a time honored procedure and transcribed the piece himself for orchestra as Opus 43b.

**Paul Hindemith** (1895-1963) began to show interest in music at the age of eleven by playing violin. By the time he was twenty, Hindemith was concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera (1915-23) and, after making viola his specialty, toured Europe with the Amar Hindemith Quartet. Around 1936, he became interested in the musical *Jugendbewegung*, a movement devoted to the furtherance of active music-making among amateurs. Hindemith's continuing interest in composing *Gebrauchsmusik*—music for practical use rather than music for art's sake—stemmed from this association. In 1927, Hindemith was appointed professor of composition at the Academy of Music in Berlin and out of his teaching experience grew his famous theoretical work, *The Craft of Musical Composition*. Published in 1937, this volume was, at the

time, the most comprehensive theory of harmony yet devised. In 1940, Hindemith was appointed to the Yale University School of Music faculty. Later he took up residence in Switzerland and made frequent visits to the United States until his death in 1963.

The *Symphony in B-flat for Concert Band* was composed at the request of Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Curry, leader of the United States Army Band, and was premiered in Washington, D.C. on April 5, 1951, with the composer conducting. The three movement symphony demonstrates Hindemith's great contrapuntal skill and the organized logic of his thematic material. His melodies develop ever-expanding lines and his skill in the organization and utilization of rhythmic variation add spice and zest to the strength of those melodies.

The first movement is in sonata-allegro form with the recapitulation economically incorporating the principal and secondary themes in a contrapuntal fashion. The second movement opens with an imitative duet between cornet and alto saxophone accompanied by a repeated chordal figure. The duet theme, along with material from the opening movement, provides the compositional resources for the remainder of the movement. The third movement, like the first two, is also in three parts. The closing portion of the third movement employs the combined themes of the first two sections while the woodwinds recall the incessant chattering of the first movement. The brass and percussion adamantly conclude the work with a dramatic final cadence. There are few, if any, original works for band which are held in such high regard by conductors and performers alike as the *Symphony in B-flat for Concert Band* by Paul Hindemith.

**Johannes Brahms** (1833-1897) began music studies with his father at an early age and made his performing debut on piano at the age of ten. He was accepted as a scholarship student with the noted Eduard Marxsen, but had to support himself by playing in taverns, restaurants, and other such establishments. At age fifteen, after performing a solo concert under an assumed name, Brahms embarked on a successful concert tour during which he had opportunities to meet many virtuosic performers of the day. Of particular significance was his meeting with Robert Schumann, who believed Brahms to be a genius. In late 1853, his first works were published including two piano sonatas and a set of six songs. He also published works under the pseudonym G.W. Marks and, while continuing to compose, he was employed as court pianist, chamber musician, and choir director.

Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, Opus 56a was composed for orchestra in 1873 and

first performed in Vienna under the original title, *St. Anthony's Chorale*. The current title, however, is a misnomer. Although the work is traditionally known as *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, it is now certain that the theme was neither Haydn's own nor one ever made use of by Haydn. The theme occurs in the first of six divertimenti for wind instruments, long thought to have been composed by Haydn, but now regarded as a forgery, possibly by one of his pupils. The real composer of these divertimenti is unknown, and the composer of the original *St. Anthony's Chorale* is, of course, also anonymous. *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* was arranged for concert band by Mark Hindsley.

Although **Richard Wagner** (1813-1883) led a tempestuous life, characterized by poverty, political persecution and derision, he stands as a giant in the history of nineteenth-century music. A precocious child, he learned much of value concerning the stage from his step-father, Ludwig Geyer, an actor of considerable talent. Inspired to become a musician, Wagner's phenomenal progress in the study of counterpoint and his intimate knowledge of the theater created in him a desire to compose operas with a dramatic story, utilizing orchestral parts equal to the vocal parts. For Wagner, music functioned to serve the needs of dramatic expression and in this regard he had no peers.

*Lohengrin* was first produced at Weimar in 1850, under the direction of Franz Liszt. The legend of the Holy Grail was the inspiration for the story of the opera. The recorded work is a transcription by Mark Hindsley of the instrumental introduction to the third act, which is followed by the festal music for the wedding of Elsa and Lohengrin. This introduction is neither traditional nor conventional, but is a free development of two strongly contrasting themes, with an interlude on a third theme.

The second theme, a period consisting of a phrase of four measures, twice repeated, rising a third higher each time, is an exceedingly impressive one. It was of this period that Hector Berlioz wrote:

Nothing comparable to this can perhaps be found in all music for grandiose vigor, force and brilliancy; launched forth by the brass instruments in unison, this theme turns the strong beats at the beginning of its three phrases, into as many cannon shots which make the listener's breast quake.

**Franz von Suppé** (1819-1895) was an Austrian composer and conductor who exhibited musical talent at a very early age. He received encouragement and assistance from the noted composer Gaetano Donizetti, a distant relative of Suppé, who was responsible for bringing him to Italy. In 1860, Suppé's *Das Pensionat* was the first successful attempt at a genuine Viennese operetta. Suppé is the earliest Viennese composer of musical farces whose works still survive and is widely known for his delightful overtures such as *Poet and Peasant*, *Light Cavalry*, and *Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna*. His total output included about 30 operas and operettas, as well as 180 other stage pieces.

*The Beautiful Galatea* is an opera which dates from 1865 and was originally staged in Berlin. Although not among his most popular productions for the stage, the overture has received numerous performances by orchestras and bands alike. There have been at least seven published arrangements of this overture for band, including the one by L. P. Laurendeau recorded by the University of Illinois Symphonic Band.

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*Notes by Dr. John R. Locke, Director of Bands, University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

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Sources for program notes:

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## 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.

## **- 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 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 Associations 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 band 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.



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