

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

1. Fiesta Del Pacifico . . . . . R. Nixon
2. Carmina Burana . . . . . C. Orff/J. Krance
3. La Procession du Rocio . . . . . J. Turina/A. Reed
4. Till Eulenspiegel's  
    Merry Pranks . . . . . R. Strauss/M. Hindsley
- 5-6. The Pines of Rome . . . . . O. Respighi/G. Duker

## The Begian Years, Volume IX

Roger Nixon (b. 1921), emeritus professor of music at San Francisco State University, received most of his professional training at the University of California at Berkeley, where his principal teacher was Roger Sessions. He also worked with Arthur Bliss, Ernest Bloch, Charles Cushing, and Frederick Jacobi, and in the summer of 1948 studied privately with Arnold Schoenberg. He was the recipient of the first Phelan Award in music composition. Among his numerous works are a viola concerto, an orchestral suite, much chamber music, choral music, songs, and music for symphonic band.

*Fiesta del Pacifico* is one of several festivals held annually in various communities in California, which celebrate the "Old Spanish Days" of the state. This particular festival is held in San Diego for twelve days each summer and features a play on the history of the area with a cast of over 1,000, a parade, a rodeo, and street dances. Nixon's driving rhythms, dazzling array of mixed meters, and sensuous melodies have made *Fiesta del Pacifico*, composed in 1966, a very popular band composition.

Carl Orff (1895-1982) studied at the Munich Academy and privately with Heinrich Kaminski. In 1925, he helped to found the *Gunter Schule* which aims to educate the lay public in creative musicianship. The principles developed by Orff have been adopted by elementary school educators in the United States and throughout the world. Orff began his career as a composer in 1925 with realizations of Monteverdi's early seventeenth-century works. He sought to renew the musical theater in an ideology of his own. His first stage work, *Carmina Burana*, was produced in 1935-36 and achieved great success.

The original score of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, subtitled "Profane songs for singers and vocal chorus with instruments and magical pictures," calls for vocal soli, three choirs, and large orchestra. The band arrangement, however, is entirely instrumental in concept, the vocal music having been fully incorporated into the band itself. Orff derived the inspiration and texts for his score from a thirteenth-century anthology of songs and poems written in medieval Latin, German, and French by the "goliards," the vagrant scholars, vagabond poets, and wandering monks of seven hundred years ago. The texts are frank avowals of earthly pleasure: eating, dancing, drinking, gambling, and lovemaking; the beauty of life and glorious springtime! Orff exhilarates us with throbbing rhythms and battering-ram tunes, and moves us with chaste tenderness and heartfelt simplicity. From the original twenty-five sections, John Krance has

arranged thirteen for symphonic band.

**Joaquin Turina** (1882-1949) was born in Seville, Spain and studied music locally before entering the Madrid Conservatory. In 1905, Turina travelled to Paris where he studied composition with Vincent d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum. Later, he became something of an instant sensation in Madrid with his symphonic poem *La Procession du Rocio*, composed in 1913. The height of his orchestral writing was reached with his *Sevillian Symphony*, which won a prize in the 1920 San Sebastian Competition. In 1930, Turina accepted a teaching position at the Madrid Conservatory

The published orchestral score for *La Procession du Rocio* carries the following descriptive note by the composer:

Every year in Seville, during the month of June, there takes place in a section of the city known as Triana, a festival called the *Procession of the Dew* in which the best families participate. They make their entry in their coaches following an image of the Virgin Mary on a golden cart drawn by oxen and accompanied by music. The people dance the *soleare* and the *seguidilla*. A drunkard sets off firecrackers, adding to the confusion. At the sound of the flutes and drums, which announce the procession, all dancing ceases. A religious theme is heard and breaks forth mingling with the pealing of the church bells and the strains of the Royal March. The procession passes and as it recedes, the festivities resume, but at length they fade away.

Long a favorite with audiences, the delightful band transcription of *La Procession du Rocio* was crafted by Alfred Reed.

**Richard Strauss** (1864-1949), like Gustav Mahler, was a celebrated conductor. Strauss was trained under Hans von Bulow and held conducting positions in the opera houses of Vienna, Weimar, Berlin, and Munich. He was frequently honored throughout Europe as a composer and conductor and was widely recognized as the dominant figure in German musical life during the early twentieth century. As the definitive post-Romantic composer, Strauss is known for his symphonic poems, generally composed before 1900, and for his operas, which came later. Strauss wrote symphonic poems with both philosophical and descriptive programs.

The symphonic tone poem *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* was composed in 1895 and is the

third of Strauss's tone poems, following *Death and Transfiguration*. Although the composer did not provide a descriptive narrative, musicologist Wilhelm Klatte has provided a lengthy analysis of the work which may be summarized as follows:

The whimsical Till rides his horse through a crowd of market women who sit chattering in their stalls. He dons the vestments of a priest, but feels uncomfortable in the disguise and soon takes it off. Till becomes a kind of "Don Juan" and waylays pretty women, but his advances are scorned. Till continues about his business playing waggish pranks, but Nemesis is upon him. Till is dragged before the criminal tribunal, but answers his charges with lies. He is put to death for crimes and his soul takes flight. The epilogue, using the theme of the introduction, continues the people's murmuring and moralizing over the Till legend.

This challenging composition was arranged for concert band by Mark Hindsley.

**Ottorino Respighi** (1879-1936) was one of the most respected Italian composers of this century. In 1900, Respighi went to St. Petersburg, Russia to play viola in the orchestra of the Imperial Opera. During this time, he studied composition with Rimsky-Korsakov, who had an enormous impact on Respighi's colorful style of orchestration. Respighi's compositional style is a mix of tuneful melodies and rich, full harmonies. He achieved tremendous success with two symphonic tone paintings, *The Fountains of Rome* and *The Pines of Rome*, each consisting of four sketches of the Roman landscape.

*The Pines of Rome* was composed in 1924 and premiered in Rome the following year. The symphonic poem consists of four parts: *The Pines of the Villa Borghese*, *The Pines Near a Catacomb*, *The Pines of the Janiculum*, and *The Pines of the Appian Way*. The work is based on the following program:

Children are at play in the pine-groves of the Villa Borghese, dancing the Italian equivalent of "Ring around a-rosy"; mimicking marching soldiers and battles; twittering like shrieking swallows at evening; and then disappearing. Suddenly the scene changes. We see shadows of the pines which overhang the entrance to a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant which re-echoes solemnly, sonorously, like a hymn, and then is mysteriously silenced. There is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of

Gianicolo's Hill. A nightingale sings. Now it is mist dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic countryside is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps is heard. To the poets fantasy appears a vision of past glories; trumpets blare and the army of the consul advances brilliantly in the grandeur of a newly risen sun toward the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph the Capitoline Hill.

The transcription of *The Pines of Rome* for symphonic band was done by Guy Duker.

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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 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 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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