

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) was the initiator of the modern Danish school of composition. As a young child, he studied the violin and the trumpet, the latter of which led to a position as trumpeter in the Odense military band. Later, Nielsen was admitted to the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen where he studied composition with O. Rosenhoff, violin with V. Tofte, and music history with Niels Gade. As a conductor, Nielsen gave performances throughout Europe. Shortly before his death, Nielsen was appointed Director of the Royal Conservatory in Copenhagen. Early in his compositional style, Nielsen was greatly influenced by the music of Gade, Grieg, Brahms and Liszt, but later on he experienced the impact of modern music, particularly in harmony. His later works display more and more chromaticism and dissonance, reserving the prior Romantic tendencies for climactic moments.

Maskerade Overture, written in 1904-06, was the overture for one of Nielsen's two works for the stage. It is a comic opera based on a play by Holberg, and is the second of the two works, the other being the tragedy *Saul and David*. This little overture is gay and brilliant, setting the mood for the light-hearted story of a young man who refuses to marry the girl of his father's choice because he has fallen in love with another (whose identity he does not know) at a masked ball. In the end, of course, the two rival girls prove to be one and the same, and the whole story ends happily.

Loris O. Chobanian (1933) was born to Armenian parents in Iraq and moved to the United States in 1960. Serious music was an everyday experience in his early childhood. His father, an amateur musician and an engineer, was a versatile performer on piano, flute and violin; he often played in string quartets and wrote an operetta for Loris, which the lad sang at age five with orchestral accompaniment. Chobanian received his B.M. and M.M. degrees from Louisiana State University, where he studied composition with Helen Gunderson and Kenneth Klaus. He received his Ph.D. degree from Michigan State University, where his composition teacher was H. Owen Reed. He has written extensively for chamber orchestra, symphony orchestra and wind ensemble, and his works have been performed abroad as well as in concert halls and in television studios in the United States. His principal works for band include *The Id*, *Capriccio for Piano and Band*, *Mesopotamian Festival*, and *Fugue-Homage to a Master*. Chobanian considers *Soliloquy-Testament of a Madman*, for baritone and orchestra, one of his best works outside the band medium. He received numerous grants and commissions and has appeared frequently as guitar soloist on television. He is a professor of composition and guitar at Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory and also teaches lute at Oberlin Conservatory.

The five traditional **Armenian Dances** portray the joyous spirit of the Armenian people, comprise a balanced group, and are individually distinctive in character. The first, third and fifth are lively, and the second and fourth are more subdued. As the dance themes are repeated, new elements of color, rhythm and counterpoint are introduced. A descending chromatic countermelody inherent in Armenian themes appears in each dance.

In the first dance, "Nazan yar," the men of the village sing the praises of a beautiful girl named Nazan. The melody alternates between major and minor. "Noubar," the second dance, is concerned with a handsome young man to whom all the young girls are attracted. The meter in this 6/8 dance is typical of the dances in the Caucasus region; although the rhythm is obvious, the dancers use minimal body motion. "Tamzara" is a sophisticated dance coming from the city of Erzerum. With its 9/8 meter grouped 2+2+2+3, the theme in this movement is woven canonically with numerous rhythmic permutations. The dancers execute a slight jump on the last two beats of each bar.

The fourth dance is constructed of two distinctly complementary themes, "Goujn ara" and "Gna gna." The slower theme provides appropriate contrast to the sprite-like dance as the two alternate and change keys. "Tsyeru bar" is the liveliest of the dances, depicting the galloping of horses. The dance develops with fragments of the theme played by different sections of the band, enhanced by coloristic punctuations from the percussion section. Some of the melodies from the other dances are used in counterpoint with the original and augmented forms of the principal theme.

Claude Debussy was the most influential French composer of his generation and the founder of modern musical impressionism. He entered the Paris Conservatory in 1873 and remained there for eleven years, studying piano with Marmontel and theoretical subjects with Guiraud (his chief composition teacher), Lavignac, Massenet and Durand. He won various prizes and medals for piano, for accompaniment and for counterpoint and fugue. Finally, in 1884, he obtained the highest honor in the conservatory's awards, the *Prix de Rome*, with the cantata, *L'Enfant Prodigue*. For several years he fought a gallant fight against cancer, but he succumbed to the illness in 1918 during the German's long-range bombing of Paris.

Premiere Rhapsody, composed for a Paris Conservatoire examination in 1911, was Debussy's only such piece, though the name indicates otherwise. This small-scale rhapsody shows Debussy in his richest impressionistic mood. The drama of the work springs from the sweeping main theme, spanning more than an octave, that alternates with scherzo-like elements: a dialogue between a hymn and a dance. Originally written for clarinet and piano, the rhapsody's success prompted an immediate setting for orchestra.

Fisher Tull, born in 1934, is director of the Music Department at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Texas where he was a student of Samuel Adler. He has won numerous prizes in musical composition, including the Ostwald Award sponsored by the American Bandmasters Association for his *Toccata* in 1970, the Arthur Fraser Memorial Award for *Three Episodes for Orchestra*, and the Walter Beeler Award for 1980.

Sketches on a Tudor Psalm, composed in 1971, is based on a sixteenth century setting of the *Second Psalm* by Thomas Tallis. The original version was in the Phrygian mode with the melody in the tenor voice. A modern adaptation is still used today in Anglican services. Its popularity is evidenced by its employment by Ralph Vaughan Williams for the basis of his *Fantasia for String Orchestra* in 1910.

The introduction sets the harmonic character by emphasizing the juxtaposition of major and minor triads. The theme is first presented by solo alto saxophone. The variations begin to unfold in an Allegro section with a melody in the clarinets that was constructed from the retrograde of the theme. In later variations, fragments of the theme are selected for rhythmic and melodic transformation.

Ingolf Dahl (1912-1970) was born in Germany of Swedish parents. He studied composition with Jarnach in Cologne and Nadia Boulanger in California. He moved to the United States in 1938, becoming an American citizen in 1943. During World War II, he was a radio conductor and arranger in Hollywood and began teaching composition at the University of Southern California in 1945. He also conducted the school orchestra from 1945 to 1960 and from 1968 to 1969. Most of Dahl's early compositions were for piano and chamber groups. His most important orchestral work, *The Tower of Saint Barbara*, was composed in 1955, and his *Elegy Concerto for Violin* was composed in 1970. Dahl's composition students felt that he transmitted deep insights, as well as techniques, and that he was a man of rare vitality. He died in Switzerland in 1970 during a sabbatical leave-his wife had died only eight weeks earlier.

Sinfonietta was commissioned by the Western and Northern Divisions of the College Band Directors National Association in 1961. Although derived from a six-note row (A-flat, E-flat, C, G, D, A), the work is in the major key of A-flat. It contains many surprises and many musical references to the band's traditions. For example, the first movement opens with the band tuning note, B-flat; features off-stage trumpets; and has a dynamic march lifted from the composer's memory of his childhood in Stockholm when he watched the changing of the palace guard. The movement ends with an intricate cadenza played by the entire clarinet section in unison, followed by the well-known marching band "roll-off" in the drum section.

The second movement is a nocturne, which deliberately avoids the usual band sounds. It is quiet, polyphonic, and has no tutti passages. It is in ternary form changing from a fugue to a waltz, and finally, to a gavotte.

The third movement is a brilliant passacaglia, which derives extraordinary vitality from the use of the tone row in constantly shifting keys. The movement becomes a set of dance variations which ends, contrary to the traditional band finale, as quietly and introspectively as it began.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990), often referred to as the "dean of American music," was first influenced by his composition teacher, Nadia Boulanger. He was an important force in encouraging and influencing many young American composers of his day and created many opportunities for their works to be premiered. Copland truly created a genuine "American" sound with his theatre and ballet scores, including the work *Appalachian Spring*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in music. His original works for band are an important part of his contribution. He has created, encouraged, and enriched the repertory, leading the way to a musical climate genuinely "made in America."

El Salon Mexico was stimulated by the composer's visit to Mexico in 1932. The orchestral work was built around Mexican popular tunes which was influenced by the music of the dance hall in Mexico City, *Salon Mexico*. According to Copland, "All that I could hope to do was to reflect the Mexico of the tourists... Because in that 'hot spot' one felt, in a very natural and unaffected way, a close contact with the Mexican people. It wasn't the music I heard, but the spirit I felt there, which attracted me. Something of that spirit is what I hope to have put in my music." The work has been described as one that wears its heart on its sleeve, with no elaborate analysis required to uncover for the listener its infectious tunes and rhythms.

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

Sources for program notes:

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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 Harding. It was during Hindsley's tenure that the University of Illinois Band Building was planned, constructed and dedicated to Harding. It is 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, Albert Austin Harding and Mark 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 Hindsley in 1970, Dr. Harry Began was appointed Director of Bands, only the third person ever to serve in that position.

During Dr. Began'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. Began greatly enjoyed conducting the transcriptions of Harding and Hindsley, continuing the grand legacy of the Illinois Band. Further, Dr. Began championed the music of Percy Grainger, producing a landmark two-album set of Grainger's works. Among transcribed literature, Began is perhaps best known for his interpretive genius with the tone poems of Richard Strauss. Among original band literature, Began'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. Began's career at Illinois demonstrated a devotion to march music which was second to none. Producing several march albums, Began demonstrated interpretive possibilities to the band world which have long been admired and imitated.

In 1985, after the retirement of Dr. Began, James Keene was appointed as the fourth Director of Bands in the history of the University of Illinois. Before coming to Illinois, 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, 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 Keene with frequent performances throughout the country at the most prestigious conferences and conventions.

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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 undergone a chemical change. To keep the original integrity and historical perspective, the compact discs in this series have not been altered to compensate for these changes.
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Symphony in B flat for Concert Band (Movts I-III) - P. Hindemith; Variations on a Theme by Haydn - J. Brahms, M. Hindsley; Lohengrin - R. Wagner, M. Hindsley; Theme and Variations, Op. 43a - A. Schoenberg; The Beautiful Galatea - F. von Suppe, L.P. Laurenduan; Ballad for Band - M. Gould; Beatrice & Benedict - H. Berlioz, F. Henning

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Symphony #1 - Samuel Barber/Dunker; Concerto in D - Giuseppe Tartini/Begian; Slavonic Dances - Antonio Dvorak/Curnow; Symphonic Variants for Euphonium - James Curnow; Dionysiaques Florent Schmitt/Dunker

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Masquerade Overture - Carl Nielsen; Armenian Dances - Loris Chobanian; Premiere Rhapsody - Claude Debussy; Sketches on a Tudor - Fisher Tull; Sinfonietta - Ingolf Dahl; El Salon Mexico - Aaron Copland/Hindsley

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The Sinfoniana - Clifton Williams; Kaddish - Francis McBeth; Celebration Overture - Paul Creston; Soleriana - Carlos Surinach; Emblems - Aaron Copland; Russian Christmas Music - Alfred Reed; Illini Fantasy - James Curnow

- 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 doctorate 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 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 60 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.



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

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 Tom Harris, Conductor
7. Premiere RhapsodyClaude Debussy [7:55]
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8. Sketches on a Tudor PsalmFisher Tull [12:05]
9. SinfoniettaIngolf Dahl [19:30]
10. El Salon MexicoAaron Copland-/ Mark Hindsley [11:13]



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