# **Program Notes:**

Praise Jerusalem! - Variations on an Armenian Easter Hymn - Alfred Reed

Praise Jerusalem! – Variations on an Armenian Easter Hymn was commissioned for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Purdue University Band, which premiered the work, conducted by Harry Begian, on April 19, 1987. This work is built on the seventh-century melody Kavia Yerosaghem! – Praise Jerusalem!, first notated by the Armenian musicologist Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935). Written in the form of a theme, five variations, and a finale, the work features every conceivable sound, color, and tonal effect. The joyful mood of the hymn "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Christ is Risen from the Dead, Alleluia!" is heightened near the end with the addition of a brass sextet.

Alfred Reed (b. 1921) grew up in a musical home in Manhattan and was well acquainted with most of the standard symphonic and operatic repertoire as an elementary student. Beginning formal music training at the age of ten, he studied trumpet and was playing professionally while still in high school. Reed became deeply interested in band music while a member of the Army Air Corps Band during World War II, and produced nearly 100 compositions and arrangements while studying with Vittorio Giannini at the Juilliard School of Music. In 1948, he began composing and arranging radio, film, and television music for NBC and ABC. Reed's academic degrees were earned at Baylor University, while he was conductor of the university orchestra, and he holds an honorary doctorate from the International Conservatory of Music at Lima, Peru. His interest in the development of educational music led him to serve as executive editor of Hansen Publishing from 1955 to 1966. He left that position to become a professor of music at the University of Miami where he headed a unique music merchandising degree program until his retirement in 1993. He continues to compose and has made numerous appearances as guest conductor in many nations, most notably in Japan. With hundreds of works for band, wind ensemble, orchestra, chorus, and various smaller chamber music groups, Reed is one of the nation's most prolific and frequently performed composers.

Prelude and Fugue in C minor - Johann Sebastian Bach / arr. Gomer Jones

The *Prelude and Fugue in c minor* by J.S. Bach was arranged for band by Professor Gomer Jones, a musicologist at Michigan State University, as a gift for Dr. Harry Begian. The manuscript score was later revised slightly by Guy Duker, then Associate Director of Bands at the University of Illinois, for the performance on this recording. Ironically, Bach composed two separate works for organ titled *Prelude and Fugue in c minor* (BWV 546 & BWV 549), but the selection arranged by Professor Jones was neither of those. Instead, the musicologist selected the first movement, *Prelude*, from Bach's fifth unaccompanied *Suite for Cello in c minor* (BWV 1011, composed in 1724) which itself is in the form of a "prelude & fugue." Bach himself transcribed the c minor *Suite for Cello* in 1724 for the lute or lute-harsichord (BWV 995) and more fully expressed and developed the harmonies implied in the cello suite. Bach's transcription for lute is, oddly enough, in g minor. This rare unpublished gem in band literature is a tribute not only to the timeless genius of Bach, but also to the creative skills of the musicologist, Gomer Jones, who elected to arrange it for the concert band.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) developed a keen musical interest at an early age. Having mastered the violin and clavier by age fifteen, Bach devoted himself to the study and mastery of the organ. His musical career flourished as an organist, but he soon dedicated his life to the art of composition. Many of his greatest works were composed during the twenty-seven years he served as

music director of the St. Thomas and St. Nicholas churches in Leipzig. One of the truly great composers, Bach's music is inspiring in any setting and is well suited for the concert band.

One of the characteristic large musical structures of the Baroque period was the combination of a prelude, toccata, or fantasia with a fugue. Most of Bach's important organ works in this form date from his Weimar period, although a few were written at Cöthen and Leipzig.

# Sinfonía India - Carlos Chávez

Sinfonía India, Carlos Chavez's second symphony, is a single-movement work completed in early 1936. The scoring includes a large battery of percussion played by four players. Though the percussion parts can be played on Western-style instruments, many of them are intended to substitute for indigenous percussion, and Chavez noted that whenever possible the work should be performed with authentic Indian instruments.

Chavez expressed three specific musical cultures in the Sinfonía India—the Yacqui and Seri peoples of the Sonoran desert in the northwest corner of the country, and the Huichol tribe of Nayarit on the western coast. The opening has the combination of duple and triple rhythms heard in much of Mexico's music, with piccolo and solo trumpet passing fragments of melody among themselves. There is constant contrast in this compact work, from almost frantic motor-driven energy, to a quiet inner section that gives a lyrical treatment to his simple but beautiful Indian melodies. This section leads gradually to a broad climax, before returning to the energetic character of the opening.

Carlos Chávez, was born in Mexico City on June13, 1899. He was a renowned composer, conductor, and educator whose distinctive, often highly percussive music synthesized elements of Mexican, Indian, and Spanish-Mexican influence. A prolific writer of music and music criticism, Chávez's output includes five ballets, seven symphonies, four concertos, a cantata and opera, and innumerable pieces for voice, piano, and chamber ensemble. He wrote two books, of which Toward A New Music: Music and Electricity became a major contribution and fundamental document of new musical thought, and more than 200 articles on music.

Chávez was trained primarily as a pianist and developed much of his compositional skills independent of instructors. Coming of age at the close of the Mexican revolution and during a time of renewed cultural nationalism, Chávez's investigation of indigenous Indian cultures, native folk elements, and dance forms brought an unprecedented vigor and visibility to 20th-century Mexican music. A master of orchestration, Chávez's use of native instruments was inimitable with polyrhythms, cross-rhythms, syncopation, and numerous irregular meters often significant elements of compositonal structure. Works such as the Sinfonía de Antígona, Sinfonía India, and a ballet for Martha Graham (La Hija de Cólquide, "The Dark Meadow") were celebrated for their remarkably distinctive and original sound.

# Concerto for Trumpet - Alexander Arutunian

David Hickman - Trumpet

Arutunian's *Concerto for Trumpet* was his sixth major composition. It was written in 1950 for the renowned trumpet player Timofei Dokschitzer. The concerto's introduction to the United States is solely due to Dokschitzer; he immigrated to the United States and brought the concerto with him. It is an energetic powerhouse of eastern European lyricism and harmonic textures.

Alexander Arutunian was born in Erevan, Armenia on September 23, 1920 and graduated from the Erevan Conservatory in 1941. Arutunian studied composition with Litinsky in Moscow at the House of Armenian Culture from 1946–48, and then returned to Armenia as Music Director of the Royal Philharmonic Society. In 1954, he was appointed music director of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. He was given a "People's Artist of the USSR" award in 1970.

The melodic and rhythmic characteristics of Armenian folk music are a strong influence in Arutunian's work. As a composer, he expresses his nationality by incorporating the flavor of ashughner (folk minstrel) improvisations. At the time the concerto was written, his compositional style was similar to Khachaturian's. However, in the 1960s he tended towards classical forms and clearer tonality.

David Hickman - Trumpet

David Hickman is considered to be one of the world's preeminent trumpet virtuosos and has performed over 2,000 solo appearances around the world as recitalist with over 500 different ensembles. He has toured extensively in Europe, Asia, South America, Australia and almost every major US city. Hickman received his B.M. at University of Colorado and continued his studies at Wichita State University. He taught at the University of Illinois from 1974 - 1982 before he went to Arizona State University where he is currently on faculty and is a Regents' Professor of Music. David Hickman is the founder of the ensemble "Summit Brass", a past president of the International Trumpet Guild and is a Yamaha Performing Artist. You may also find Mr. Hickman performing the Jerry Bilik "Trumpet Concerto", on Volume 16 of this series.

# Music for a Festival - Gordon Jacob

Music for a Festival was composed in 1951 for the "Festival of Britain." The premiere performance occurred on May 14, 1951 at the Royal Festival Hall in London. Conductor Meredith Roberts led this initial performance which included the Massed Bands of Brigade of Guards as well as the Kneller Hall Trumpets and Trombones. The eleven movement work is thoroughly rooted in the British tradition of Edward Elgar and draws upon renaissance and baroque forms for the titles of the movements.

Gordon Jacob, a native of London, was born in 1895 and educated at the Royal College of Music. For many years, Jacob was a teacher of counterpoint, orchestration, and composition at the college. As a composer, his orchestral and choral works include a ballet, a concert overture, two symphonies, numerous concertos for wind and string instruments, many pedagogic works for piano and for chorus, a variety of chamber works, songs, and film music. Jacob ranks as one of the foremost contributors to the expanding repertoire of original works for band through his compositions for military band - the English term for a wind group of complete instrumentation as opposed to the British Brass Band. Two notable works are An Original Suite, which is a worthy companion to the Holst suites and the Vaughan Williams suite for band, and a monumental work, Music for a Festival, commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain for the Festival of Britain in 1951. In addition, he has arranged the keyboard music of William Byrd for band in two delightful works, William Byrd Suite, and The Battell. From 1928, when he composed An Original Suite, to the present period of commissioned works, Jacob's band compositions have spanned a period of over fifty years. Recent pieces for band include: Giles Farnaby Suite, Symphony for Band "A.D. 78," Tribute to Canterbury, Fantasia for Euphonium and Band, Miscellanies for Alto Saxophore and Band, and Cameos for Bass Trombone and Band.

# - 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.

# 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 hands "

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 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 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 Harding and 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, 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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About this project

In order to preserve and make permanent the artistic accomplishments of Dr. Begian at the University of Illinois, Mark Custom Recording Service, Inc. is producing a limited number of compact disc recordings such as this one. Works on this CD have personally been selected by Dr. Begian. This project was originally undertaken by Mark Records as a tribute to Dr. Begian and the memory of Vincent S. Morette, this company's founder. who's great admiration of Dr. Begian's and his bands was a source of great inspiration for him and his own bands.

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Dr. Harry Begian, conductor

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Finale

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