

AMERICAN ORIGINALS

USAF HERITAGE OF AMERICA BAND
COL Lowell Graham, Conductor



DELLO JOIO

GIANNINI

GOULD

MENNIN

PERSICETTI

SCHUMAN

STRAVINSKY



NORMAN DELLO JOIO

(1913-2008)

VARIANTS ON A MEDIEVAL TUNE (11:15)

(E.B. Marks)

- 1 Introduction
Andante moderato (0:29)
- 2 Tema: *In dulci jubilo* –
semplice (0:58)
- 3 Variation I
Allegro deciso (1:03)
- 4 Variation II
Lento, pesante (2:19)
- 5 Variation III
Allegro spumante (1:27)
- 6 Variation IV
Andante (2:49)
- 7 Variation V
Allegro gioioso (2:07)

8 MORTON GOULD

(1913-1996)

BALLAD FOR BAND (8:30)

(G. Schirmer)

9 PETER MENNIN

(1923-1983)

CANZONA (4:50)

(Carl Fischer)

VINCENT PERSICHETTI

(1915-1987)

DIVERTIMENTO FOR BAND, OP. 42 (10:59)

(Elkan-Vogel)

- 10 Prologue (1:23)
- 11 Song (2:17)
- 12 Dance (0:59)
- 13 Burlesque (1:42)
- 14 Soliloquy (2:39)
- 15 March (1:56)

16 IGOR STRAVINSKY

(1882-1971)

CIRCUS POLKA (3:42)

(Associated Music Publishers)

17 WILLIAM SCHUMAN

(1910-1992)

GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE (8:35)

(G. Schirmer)

VITTORIO GIANNINI

(1903-1966)

SYMPHONY No. 3 (22:57)

(Franco Colombo)

- 18 *Allegro energico* (7:33)
- 19 *Adagio* (6:20)
- 20 *Allegretto* (3:39)
- 21 *Allegro con brio* (5:12)

TOTAL TIME 70:48

USAF HERITAGE OF AMERICA BAND
COL LOWELL GRAHAM, Conductor

RECORDED FEBRUARY 1994 IN
CHRYSLER HALL PERFORMING ARTS THEATER, NORFOLK VA

PRODUCED BY
Lowell Graham

RECORDED AND MASTERED BY
Bruce Leek

COVER AND LAYOUT BY
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MICROPHONES: Sennheiser MKH20, Sennheiser MKH40, Audio Technica AT4049, Beyer M160
MICROPHONE PRE-AMPS: Millennia Media HV-3, FM Acoustics Class-Amps, Grace Design 801
RECORDING CONSOLE: Ramsa WRS4424 (modified by John Windt)
CABLES: MIT-CVT 2C/3D, MIT Z-Center Power Conditioning
SPEAKERS: ATC SCM 20SL Monitors
RECORDERS: Tascam DA38
DAT DECKS: Panasonic SV3800
PROCESSOR: Prism Sound ADA-8, Prism Sound MR2024T interface
REFERENCE HEADPHONES: Sony MDR V6

The title of this recording tells all. By definition an “original” is innovative, creative, and imaginative. It can also mean the first, initial or primary, all of which apply. Each of these works represents the best in pure music or creates intense images through the precise sonic and compositional choices made by the composer. Fresh ideas abound as this was a golden era of composition by America’s most respected composers. This is not band music; it is music which uses the American band as its voice. It is pure, unadulterated American music. It is the real McCoy. What better than to listen to these American Originals than through the performance of another American musical institution, the ACC Heritage of America Band? Enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lowell G. Fisher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

After graduating from the Juilliard School of Music, Norman Dello Joio studied with Paul Hindemith at the Berkshire Music Center and at the Yale School of Music. Although Dello Joio's time with Hindemith was relatively brief, Hindemith was influential in shaping Dello Joio's musical thinking. Hindemith advised the young composer to speak naturally in his music, without concern for models that would have little relevance to his experience and temperament. His emphasis on craftsmanship and detail would serve Dello Joio well.

Variants on a Medieval Tune was commissioned by the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation in 1963 for Paul Bryan and the Duke University Band. The medieval tune that serves as the basis for the work is *In dulci jubilo*, a tune liturgically associated with Christmas. Although the text that goes with the tune carries a religious message, Dello Joio's treatment of the tune itself does not suggest any kind of outside "model," either religious or medieval. Rather, the composer treats the melody simply as a source which he explores for its motivic and rhythmic potential. The harmonic world of the piece is entirely Dello Joio's own, and does not attempt to evoke any other musical era.

Although the piece is titled *Variants*, it is not a theme-and-variations in the usual sense. Instead, after stating the material

which will be developed, Dello Joio creates several small, free-standing pieces, each of which has its own identity and lives its own life, at the same time it relates to its pre-existing melodic source.

Morton Gould, a lifelong resident of New York, was on the musical staff of Radio City Music Hall when it opened in 1932 and came of age during the golden era of radio. Through his music programs *Music for Today* and *The Chrysler Hour* he attained national recognition, as well as the discipline to write to a deadline and the habit of providing descriptive titles for movements rather than just tempo indications.

In 1940 Gould attended a performance of his *Cowboy Rhapsody* by the University of Michigan Band under the direction of Frank Revelli, and was astonished by the ensemble's musicality. He dedicated his next band piece, *Jericho Rhapsody* (1941) to that ensemble. By 1946 Gould felt he wanted to do something different for the band. In his own words:

Ballad for Band is basically an introverted piece that starts slowly, is linear, and has a quiet lyricism; it is not big band in the sense that there is little razzle-dazzle. A discerning listener who is programmed to appreciate the nuances and subtlety of a contemporary piece would respond favorably to this, but others merely find it from

relatively pleasant to slightly boring. Only certain listeners respond to what this piece represents musically.

The romanticism of folk music is strongly evident in this piece. It also captures the spirit of popular music and dance forms. The beauty of the melody can hide the complexities of theme exchanges within the various sections of the band. Phrases play off one another and build tension. Accents, syncopation and lively rhythmic patterns complement the lush harmonies of the chord structures.

Peter Mennin, a native of Erie PA, studied briefly at the Oberlin (Ohio) Conservatory of Music before joining the U.S. armed forces in 1942. At the end of his service Mennin resumed his studies, now at the Eastman School of Music under Howard Hanson and Bernard Rogers. Mennin balanced the demands of administrator (director of the Peabody Conservatory, afterward becoming president of the Juilliard School) with those of composer, and performed brilliantly in both capacities.

From the beginning of his career, Mennin concentrated almost exclusively on serious works in large forms. Mennin acknowledged the influence of Renaissance polyphony in his music, which has more of an international flavor than that of many of his American colleagues. His work is characterized by a conflict, so to speak, between flowing counterpoint and

aggressive, nervous energy and syncopated rhythmic drive. His stylistic development was in the direction of greater astringency and compression, focused on works which were almost always abstract and non-programmatic. *Canzona*, written and first performed in 1951, is Mennin's only published work for band. It was commissioned by the American bandmaster Edwin Franko Goldman in cooperation with the League of Composers, and was first performed by Goldman and his Goldman Band in New York on 15 June 1951.

COL Graham describes *Canzona* as “gritty music, with driving internal rhythms. It is cellular, in that one thing leads logically to another. Mennin's language is usually dark and has a recognizable 'sound' and personality – it pulsates. I treat this music melodically, although it is almost schizophrenic – there are rhythmic cells that are trying to punch through its long melodic lines. I believe that maximizing these two contrasting traits accents and emphasizes the drama of the piece.”

Vincent Persichetti was born to an Italian father and a German mother in Philadelphia, where he lived his entire life. He completed his doctorate at the Philadelphia Conservatory, and in 1947 William Schuman invited him to join the Juilliard faculty, where he taught for the rest of his career. He became chairman of Juilliard's composition department in 1963 and of the literature and materials department in 1970.

Persichetti's compositional career flourished during a period when American composition was deeply divided among rival stylistic factions, each seeking to invalidate the work of its opponents. In the face of this partisan antagonism, Persichetti advocated the notion of a broad working vocabulary, or "common practice," based on a fluent assimilation of all the materials and techniques which appeared during the twentieth century.

Persichetti identified two main currents in his own compositional style, which he called "graceful" and "gritty." Beyond that description, his music is characterized by lucid textures, sparse gestures, epigrammatic forms, a fondness for pandiatonic and polytonal harmony, a playful rhythmic vitality and a pervasive geniality of spirit.

During an interview Persichetti recalled "composing in a log cabin schoolhouse in El Dorado, Kansas, during the summer of 1949. Working with some lovely woodwind figures, accentuated by choirs of aggressive brasses and percussion beating, I soon realized the strings weren't going to enter, and my *Divertimento* began to take shape." Completed the following year, the work exemplifies Persichetti's propensity for pieces made of tiny epigrammatic movements. The opening *Prologue* displays one of the composer's most distinctive trademarks, the use of rapid duple meter as a framework for

lively, playful, syncopated rhythmic by-play. *Song* is reflective in tone, with melody and accompaniment both based on an undulating figure. *Dance* is gentle and childlike. *Burlesque* features the tubas with a mocking melody against raucous offbeats, framing a taunting central section. In *Soliloquy* a cornet solo creates a mood of haunting nostalgia. *March* returns to the rousing spirit of the opening movement.

Early in 1942, Stravinsky was approached by the choreographer George Balanchine on behalf of the Ringling Brothers of the Barnum and Bailey Circus and asked to write the music for a polka to be danced by a troupe of young elephants in ballet tutus. It is said that Balanchine immediately telephoned Stravinsky. “What kind of music?” asked the composer. “A polka.” “For whom?” “Elephants.” “How old?” “Young.” “If they are very young, I’ll do it.” As the elephants were very young, Stravinsky agreed, and the *Circus Polka*, dedicated to “a young elephant,” was the result.

In an interesting article (*Entr’acte: Stravinsky and the Elephants*, Concert Bulletin of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for 13-15 January 1944), George Brinton Beal refers to some of the difficulties involved in training and rehearsing the elephants. “The first time Merle Evans, veteran bandmaster of the Big Show, put the music up on his rack and started tooting away on his cornet, he knew there was trouble ahead. . . . Polite,

as elephants always are, the big performers listened to the circus band, as it played their working music through. They listened, but with growing distaste and uneasiness, according to both the bandmaster and the superintendent of bulls [bull elephants].” Beal explains that one of the main motives for staging this elephant ballet was to display the unique talents of Old Modoc, “the best loved and most widely known elephant,” whose solo dancing had long been featured by the Big Show. He goes on to say “Aside from the dancing of old Modoc, in center ring, the place of honor, ‘Display No. 18’ was not a pretty act. The ballet skirts made the bulls appear ridiculous. The music didn’t suit them. In spite of some of the stunts which they are made to perform, elephants are dignified animals. They respond instantly to waltz tunes and soft, dreamy music, even to some military numbers of a particular circusy tempo. The involved music of Stravinsky’s ‘Elephant Ballet’ was both confusing and frightening to them. It robbed them of their feeling of security and confidence in the world about them – so alien to their native condition of life. It would have taken very little at any time during the many performances of the ballet music to cause a stampede.”

Nonetheless, the ballet was performed no fewer than 425 times.

William Schuman was a native of New York City. Despite an early passion for baseball, Schuman found time to study the

violin and to composer popular songs. Collaborations with E.B. Marks, Jr. and Frank Loesser produced songs for vaudeville and nightclub performers. While studying business at New York University, Schuman attended a performance of the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Arturo Toscanini and decided that composition would be his life's work.

G. Schirmer named Schuman Director of Publications in 1944, but he left that post the following year to assume the presidency of the Juilliard School. Schuman contributed substantially to the growth of Juilliard during his more than twenty years of leadership. He persuaded the stewards of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts to include Juilliard in the plans for their newly-designed complex. Eventually Schuman was named President of Lincoln Center, a post he held until a heart attack in 1968 hastened his retirement.

George Washington Bridge, written in 1950, is subtitled *An Impression for Band*. This piece, although programmatic, does not live by a time-line, like a symphonic poem, for example. Rather, its method is the contemplation of its subject, not unlike the example of the artist's mobile, viewed from various angles and vantage points. The composer has included the following remarks with his score:

There are few days in the year when I do not see the George Washington Bridge. I pass it on my way to work as I drive along the Henry Hudson Parkway on the New York shore. Ever since my student days when I watched the progress of its construction, this bridge has had for me an almost human personality, and this personality is astonishingly varied, assuming different moods depending on the time of day or night, the traffic and, of course, my own mood as I pass by. I have walked across it late at night when it was shrouded in fog, and during the brilliant sunshine hours of midday. I have driven over it countless times and passed under it on boats. Coming to New York City by air, sometimes I have been lucky enough to fly right over it. It is difficult to imagine a more gracious welcome or dramatic entry to the great metropolis.

The music itself, like the bridge, is conceived as an arch, ABCBA. The majestic opening and concluding sections feature bitonal structures of concurrent progressions in the keys of C and B flat. These triads, separated by a whole step, form a seminal polychord developed to great effect in the culminating measures of the piece. That the outer voices of the opening theme move in perfect contrary motion symbolizes the symmetry of the bridge, or perhaps the bridge and its reflection on the water below.

Vittorio Giannini was born in Philadelphia into a home with a strong musical background. From 1939 to 1965 he taught concurrently at the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music at the Curtis Institute – he was one of the country’s most active composition teachers, and his students included Alfred Reed and John Corigliano, among many others. He served as the first President of the North Carolina School of the Arts, which he helped found, until his untimely death in 1966.

His *Symphony No. 3* was written in 1961 on a commission from the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation and represents Giannini’s second venture in writing for concert band. About this Symphony, Giannini commented:

The *Symphony No. 3* was composed on a commission by the Duke University Band and its conductor, Paul Bryan, during the summer of 1956, in Rome Italy, where I was spending my vacation. It is my second work for band; the first, Preludium and Allegro, was commissioned by Richard Franko Goldman.

I can give no other reason for choosing to write a symphony to fulfill this commission than that I “felt like it,” and the thought of doing it interested me a great deal.

I will not go into the technical details of the work. Basically, the listener is not concerned with them beyond what they can hear for themselves. I follow no 'isms' when I compose; I try to project and communicate a feeling, a thought that is in me at the time, using whatever technique is suggested by my mood to achieve this communication.

The form of the movements is this: first movement – sonata allegro; second movement – ABA; third movement – ABAB; fourth movement – sonata allegro. There is no program – only what I heard and felt at the time. I hope it makes music.

The first movement is romantic in nature, with a main theme built from ascending fourths. The second movement opens with an oboe solo accompanied by trombones, and develops a gentle lyric mood featuring the woodwinds and horns. The third movement is based on the interplay of 6/8 and 3/4 meters and features the alto saxophone and bassoon in frequent opposition to the rhythmic background. The fourth movement juxtaposes two broad themes, with rhythmic punctuations in the brass and sweeping passages in the woodwinds providing contrast. The conclusion of this movement achieves a thrilling climax, using all the winds and percussion.

LOWELL E. GRAHAM

A native of Greeley, Colorado, Lowell E. Graham is the Chairman of the Music Department at the University of Texas at El Paso and is the recipient the Abraham Chavez Professorship in Music. He enjoys a distinguished career conducting ensembles in many musical media, including the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, the Virginia Symphony, the Spokane Symphony, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, the American Promenade Orchestra, the Greeley Philharmonic, Palm Beach Chamber Orchestra, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Banda Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Paulo, Orquestra de Sopros Brasileira, the National Symphonic Winds, the National Chamber Players, the Avatar Brass Ensemble and the Denver Brass. In 2006 he was named Director Honorífico Anual for the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Paraguay. He has held numerous conducting positions to include that of the Commander and Conductor of the United States Air Force's premier musical organization in Washington, DC. While there he became the senior ranking musician in the Department of Defense.

Graham has initiated many important media projects for American Public Radio and other broadcasting organizations, as well as live telecast/webcast concerts and video productions on which his credits include those of conductor, writer and musical producer. He is a frequent guest on radio talk shows and performed on NBC's Today Show for five consecutive years on Independence Day.

Graham's Grammy-winning recordings have been recognized in *Stereophile's* "Records To Die For" list and *The Absolute Sound's* "The Super Disc List".