



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
Convention/Clinic July 20-22, 2023**

**William D. Revelli - Print the Legend!**

**CLINICIAN:  
Larry Livingston**

**Demo Group: Spring ISD Alumni Band**

The Life Of  
**WILLIAM REVELLI**

Sourced from Wikipedia

# William Revelli

**William D. Revelli** (February 12, 1902 – July 16, 1994) was an American music educator and conductor best known for his association with the University of Michigan, where he directed the university's bands including the Michigan Marching Band 1935 to 1971. During his 36 years as director, the Michigan Marching Band won international acclaim for its musical precision. Revelli is also credited with innovations that moved college marching bands across the country away from rigid military formations. Among other things, Revelli's Michigan Marching Band was the first to synchronize music and movement and the first to use an announcer.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Early years

Born in Spring Gulch, Colorado, Revelli studied violin as a child,<sup>[2]</sup> graduated from the Beethoven Conservatory of Music in St. Louis, and received degrees from the Chicago Musical College, Columbia School of Music and Vandercook School of Music.<sup>[3]</sup> He also played in various pit orchestras in Chicago before accepting a high-school conducting job at Hobart High School in Hobart, Indiana in 1925.<sup>[2][4][5]</sup> Revelli transformed the Hobart High School Band into one of the best small high school bands in the country. He was music director at Hobart from 1925 to 1935, where his bands won either five or six national championships.<sup>[2][4][5][6]</sup> In 1934, Revelli's Hobart band was invited to play at the World's Fair,<sup>[7]</sup> and one newspaper reported: "William Revelli has developed his Hobart, Ind., class B band to a point where it is ranked by many with the best class A organizations from larger schools."<sup>[8]</sup> In 1931, Revelli was paid a salary of \$5,000 a year, a large sum at that time.<sup>[9]</sup>

## University of Michigan

### Overview of career at Michigan

In 1935 Revelli was hired by the University of Michigan as director of bands.<sup>[1]</sup> Revelli almost decided against applying for the Michigan job because the pay was significantly lower than what he was earning in Hobart, but he did apply for and later accept the job,<sup>[2]</sup> a position he held for 36 years. Revelli retired in 1972 and was director emeritus until his death in 1994,<sup>[1]</sup> Under his direction, the Michigan Marching Band was acclaimed for its

<div>Doctor</div> <div>William D. Revelli</div>	
<span></span> <div>A black and white portrait of William D. Revelli, a middle-aged man with a receding hairline, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is holding a baton in his right hand and looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.</div>	
Background information	
Birth name	William D. Revelli
Born	February 12, 1902 <div></div> <span><span></span></span> Spring Gulch, Colorado, U.S.
Died	July 14, 1994 (aged 92) <div></div> <span><span></span></span> Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.
Genres	Classical · <u>Marching Band</u>
Occupation(s)	Musician, music educator, conductor, and marching band director
Instrument(s)	Violin
Years active	1912–1994
Hobart High School Band Director	
<span>In office</span>	1925–1935
University of Michigan Director of Bands	
<span>In office</span>	



WILLIAM REVELLI  
William Revelli, 1944

musical precision, intricate formations and high-stepping style. The Marching Band under Revelli was “the first to score original music to band shows, to synchronize music and movement, to use an announcer, to do a post-game show, and the first to host a high school Band Day.”<sup>[10]</sup>

### Reputation as taskmaster

Known on Michigan’s campus as “The Chief,” Revelli was known as a tough taskmaster.<sup>[2]</sup> Revelli had a fierce dedication to excellence and drilled the desire for perfection into his band

students. One former band member recalled that the “sequence of our attitudes toward him often went from fear to anger to respect to awe to reverence.”<sup>[4]</sup> Another recalled: “He was a tyrant who was feared by many, and an educator revered by all.”<sup>[2]</sup> One of his students from the 1940s recalled the same emotions but noted: “I learned more about music-making in that

little class ... than I had learned in my prior 12 years of private lessons.”<sup>[11]</sup> It has been said that, if asked, “nearly every student who played under Revelli could vividly recount some memory of him; he left a lasting impression on everyone with whom he crossed paths.”<sup>[12]</sup>

Interviewed in 1970, Revelli said: "I've been called the Vince Lombardi of Ann Arbor because I just won't compromise. I'm intolerable when it comes to perfection. Sometimes I'm even downright mean about it."<sup>[13]</sup> Revelli added that his pursuit of perfection was about more than the music: "This striving for perfection will carry over into other areas of their lives."<sup>[14]</sup> In December 1964, Revelli described the guiding principles that he sought to instill into his students for 36 years. In a speech delivered to the Marching Band prior to its appearance at the 1965 Rose Bowl game (and published in its entirety in the October 1994 issue of Michigan’s alumni magazine *Michigan Today*), Revelli said:

"Demand of yourself! How much do you demand of yourself of what I'm talking about? Not even 10 percent, some of you. ... I want to know how you can dedicate yourself to your forthcoming positions in the musical world, when you can't dedicate yourself right now to what you're doing in a simple little march. ... The world is full of people who do things just about right. Just about. And a few on the top do them just right—most of the time. Nobody's perfect! When are you going to start to demand of yourself what I demand of myself? When are you going to be as uncompromising with what you do as I am uncompromising in what I hear and what I insist on? When? Are you waiting for some miracle? The miracle will be when you demand of yourself everything you've got of yourself. That'll be the day. And I don't only mean 5 minutes of 10; I mean 10 minutes out of 10; I mean 60 minutes out of an hour, 24 hours a day, at least all of your waking hours. ... I don't want it just about right! To me, just about right is terrible! ... Now, nobody's killed when you play a half-note as a dotted quarter. But you might, from learning to play a half-note a full half-note, make the difference in the lives of 50,000 little kids. ... You don't piddle with music—it's a good-time-Charlie business, and for me, the wonderful good times come out of hearing somebody play beautifully. I don't care if it's Stars and Stripes, The Victors or what it is. I mean, there's a pride. And this guy knows he's good! And nobody

	1935–1971
<b>Preceded by</b>	Bernard Hirsch
<b>Succeeded by</b>	George R. Cavender
<b>Personal details</b>	
<b>Resting place</b>	Washtenong Memorial Park, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Michigan, U.S.
<b>Education</b>	Beethoven Conservatory of Music, Chicago Musical College, Vandercook School of Music, and Columbia School of Music D.M.
<b>Signature</b>	

can take that away from him. When they play sloppy and don't care or don't know—a great many of them don't even know, they don't know how bad it is—they can be forgiven, but more they should be pitied.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Revelli also viewed school bands as a bulwark against juvenile delinquency. He noted: "We keep our musicians too interested and busy to get into mischief.”<sup>[15]</sup> On another occasion, he noted, "Young music students have better things to do than get in trouble.”<sup>[14]</sup>

## Development of the Michigan Bands

Revelli recruited talented musicians to Michigan like a football coach recruited top athletes. Revelli required all male wind instrument majors to participate in the Marching Band. This requirement swelled the number of students in the Marching Band.<sup>[12]</sup> Revelli was also known for his use of new music in his performances, often commissioning new pieces.<sup>[2]</sup> Another innovation during Revelli's years as band director was the introduction of dance steps. The tradition began with a dance routine to the tune Alexander's Ragtime Band which proved to be a big hit with the crowd.<sup>[12]</sup>



William Revelli, 1956

In the 1930s, General Motors divisions, Buick and Chevrolet, paid for the band to travel to away games. In a show of appreciation, Revelli had the band line up in a “Buck – I” formation at the 1938 Ohio State game. Then, while playing Buick's theme song, the letter "I" moved between the "u" and the "c" in "Buck" spelling out "Buick". The next morning, athletic director Fielding H. Yost reportedly called Revelli at his home at 2:00 a.m. and said: "Young man, never do that again!" Yost did not approve of the injection of commercial advertising onto the college football field.<sup>[12]</sup>

Revelli was also dedicated to furthering musical education in high schools. He regularly toured the Midwest offering band clinics in small towns and big cities. In 1949, Revelli held the first Band Day at Michigan Stadium. Twenty-nine high school bands marched into the stadium and played with the Michigan Marching Band under the direction of Revelli. By the 1960s, the number of Band Day participants had grown to more than 14,000.<sup>[2][12]</sup> Revelli was also the Chairman of the Instrumental Winds Department at the University of Michigan.<sup>[2]</sup> He was an advocate within the School of Music for wind music. Aside from directing the large ensembles, Revelli promoted chamber music as well as the importance of private instruction on each student's wind instrument at the University. Starting in 1942, Revelli offered the “Small Wood-wind ensemble,” as a way to encourage wind chamber music. The vision of professor Revelli helped bring in teachers for every wind instrument and paved the way for the University of Michigan to become one of the premiere music institutions in the United States.<sup>[16]</sup>

In 1946, the band moved to Harris Hall. Revelli joked that the band was making "progress" as it moved from a building built in 1854—Morris Hall—to one built in 1888. The large upstairs room with its plaster walls and wooden floor provided the perfect acoustical setting for a band rehearsal. Revelli later said the "Michigan Band sound" was in part due to the perfect acoustics of Harris Hall and Hill Auditorium.

In 1961, Revelli and the U-M Symphony Band, under sponsorship of the U.S. State Department, toured the Soviet Union, Romania, Egypt, Greece, and five other Near East countries for 15 weeks.<sup>[17][18]</sup> One of the attendees at the USSR concert in Minsk, USSR - according to the Warren Commission report - was none other than Lee Harvey Oswald - the reported assassin of John F. Kennedy. On other tours, the Symphony Band under Revelli appeared at Carnegie Hall in New York, the Philadelphia Academy of Music, Boston Symphony Hall, and the Shrine Auditorium in Detroit.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Revelli teaches “The Victors” to the football team



Revelli on Michigan Stadium game program, October 1970

When Bo Schembechler was hired as Michigan’s football coach in 1969, Revelli was the first person to visit him when he arrived at his new office: “I’m in my office, and the first visitor that I get, the absolute first visitor is William D. Revelli.”<sup>[19]</sup> Revelli sat down and said, “I want you to know that I coach my band exactly the same way you coach your football team. We’ll have discipline, and we’ll do it the way it’s supposed to be done!”<sup>[19]</sup> Revelli added, “Anything you need from me or the band, all you need to do is ask.”<sup>[20]</sup>

When the freshmen arrived in the fall of 1969, Schembechler asked Revelli to teach them how to sing “The Victors.” Schembechler said, “He didn’t just teach them ‘The Victors.’ He taught them Michigan tradition!”<sup>[20]</sup> Schembechler gathered the freshmen at Yost Field House, and Revelli entered in full uniform – described by Schembechler as “a lean, short, distinguished-looking older gentleman—a band director right out of central casting.”<sup>[20]</sup> Revelli rose to the podium, tapped his baton, looked right into their eyes and said, “John Philip Sousa called this the greatest fight song ever written. And you will sing it with respect!”<sup>[20]</sup> Revelli brought out a pitch pipe and began the instructions. “You sing from down in here, in your diaphragm. You bring it up from down here with feeling.” Then he blew the starting note on his pitch pipe. The players started, “Hail to the Victors, valiant –” Revelli interrupted, “No, No, No! That’s terrible! There’s no enthusiasm. You didn’t sing it without enthusiasm!”<sup>[19]</sup> They started again, and Revelli interrupted again. “No, no, no! We’re gonna get this right if I’m here all night!”<sup>[19]</sup>

Schembechler thought so much of Revelli’s performance that he invited him back every year to teach the freshmen what Michigan tradition was about.<sup>[20]</sup> Schembechler recalled, “He was absolutely great, and the freshmen absolutely loved it. And let me tell you, every one of those freshmen came out of that session with Revelli knowing ‘The Victors.’ They knew the words, they knew how to sing it, and they knew how to emphasize the right spots. They flat out knew how to do it. And it was only because he came over there with the idea that those guys were going to come out of that meeting room knowing how to sing this fight song the right way or else! And they did. That was Bill Revelli.”<sup>[19]</sup>

The admiration between Revelli and Schembechler was mutual. In a 1970 interview, Revelli compared himself and his training methods to those of Schembechler. “Bo and I speak the same language. Psychologically, our practices are the same. Both the team and the band have to perfect their fundamentals before they can do anything else. And both need proper warmups to stay in shape in the

off-season. Sometimes we'll spend 45 minutes on calisthenics of the embouchure (perfecting the position of the lips on the mouthpiece of an instrument). I had one boy come back who hadn't practiced all summer. His lips were about six months behind everyone else's."<sup>[13]</sup>

## College Band Directors National Association

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Revelli was the founder of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) in 1941. The CBDNA began as a committee of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). In the fall of 1938 that committee, under the leadership of Revelli, met independently in Chicago. The group met again in December 1941 and formed the University and College Band Conductors Conference. The name of the organization was changed to the College Band Directors National Association in 1947.<sup>[21]</sup> Revelli also served as a President of the National Band Association and the American Bandmasters Association, and was named Honorary Life President of the CBDNA.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Revelli International School of Music

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In the 1970s, Revelli headed a school in Glion/Montreux Switzerland called the Revelli International School of Music. High School students from various states attended for a short time and then toured through various countries in Europe.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Awards and honors

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Revelli received numerous awards and honors for his contributions to marching band music, music education, and the University of Michigan. These honors include:

- In 1947, the Chicago Musical College conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Music on Revelli.<sup>[6]</sup>
- In 1949, at the Twelfth Biennial Convention of Kappa Kappa Psi, National Honorary Fraternity for College Bandsmen, Revelli was honored by being elected to the position of Grand Honorary President, "an honor seldom given and one of the highest honors that could be bestowed upon any conductor or member of the fraternity."<sup>[23]</sup>
- In 1961, the University of Michigan presented Revelli with the faculty award for distinguished achievement.<sup>[17]</sup>
- In 1964, Revelli was honored as one of the first ten recipients of Kappa Kappa Psi's Distinguished Service to Music Medal.
- In the 1970s, the Michigan Marching Band moved into a new building constructed specifically to house the band. The building, located at 350 East Hoover, was named William Revelli Hall.
- In 1981, Revelli was among the first living inductees to the National Band Association Hall of Fame of Distinguished Band Conductors.<sup>[1]</sup>
- In 1989, the Louis Sudler Foundation and the John Philip Sousa Foundation presented Revelli with their highest award, the Order of Merit.<sup>[1]</sup>
- In 1989, Troy State University (now Troy University) conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on Revelli.<sup>[24]</sup>



Revelli Hall

- In 1994, he was posthumously awarded the Charles E. Lutton Man of Music Award by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia fraternity for men of music at its national convention in St. Louis, Missouri. The award was accepted on his behalf by his grandson. He had been initiated by the Fraternity's Alpha Lambda chapter at Illinois Wesleyan University in 1935.

## Death and family

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Revelli died of heart failure on July 16, 1994 at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor at age 92.<sup>[25][1]</sup> He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary, and his daughter, Rosemary Margaret Revelli Strong. He is survived by his grandson John William Revelli Strong and Kimberly (Strong) Snyder, and his great grandchildren Sara and William Snyder. He is interred at Washtenaw Memorial Park in Ann Arbor.<sup>[26]</sup>

## See also

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- Michigan Marching Band
- University of Michigan
- Marching band

## Notes

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## External links

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- [The Legacy of 'The Chief' By Michael Zucker](https://web.archive.org/web/20080521023116/http://www.umich.edu/~newsinfo/MT/94/Oct94/mt16o94.html) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080521023116/http://www.umich.edu/~newsinfo/MT/94/Oct94/mt16o94.html>)
- [The Michigan Marching Band: The William Revelli Years 1935-1971](https://web.archive.org/web/20080118160208/http://mmb.music.umich.edu/history/revelli.asp) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080118160208/http://mmb.music.umich.edu/history/revelli.asp>)
- [The University of Michigan Bands: The Man Behind the Legacies](https://archive.today/20130117234004/http://www.banddirector.com/article/rl-history/u-of-m-bands-the-man-behind-the-legacies?resourcelibrary=4) (<https://archive.today/20130117234004/http://www.banddirector.com/article/rl-history/u-of-m-bands-the-man-behind-the-legacies?resourcelibrary=4>)
- William Revelli, "The Five Requisites of a Successful Musical Performance" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110725033421/http://www.texasbandmasters.org/PDFs/TBMR/2003/2003-03-Revelli1.pdf>)
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- [Revelli: The Long Note - University of Michigan Heritage Project](http://heritage.umich.edu/story/revelli-the-long-note/) (<http://heritage.umich.edu/story/revelli-the-long-note/>)
- [Interview with William Revelli](http://www.bruceduffie.com/revelli.html) (<http://www.bruceduffie.com/revelli.html>), August 1, 1991

# William Revelli

## Director of Bands

### A Conversation with Bruce Duffie

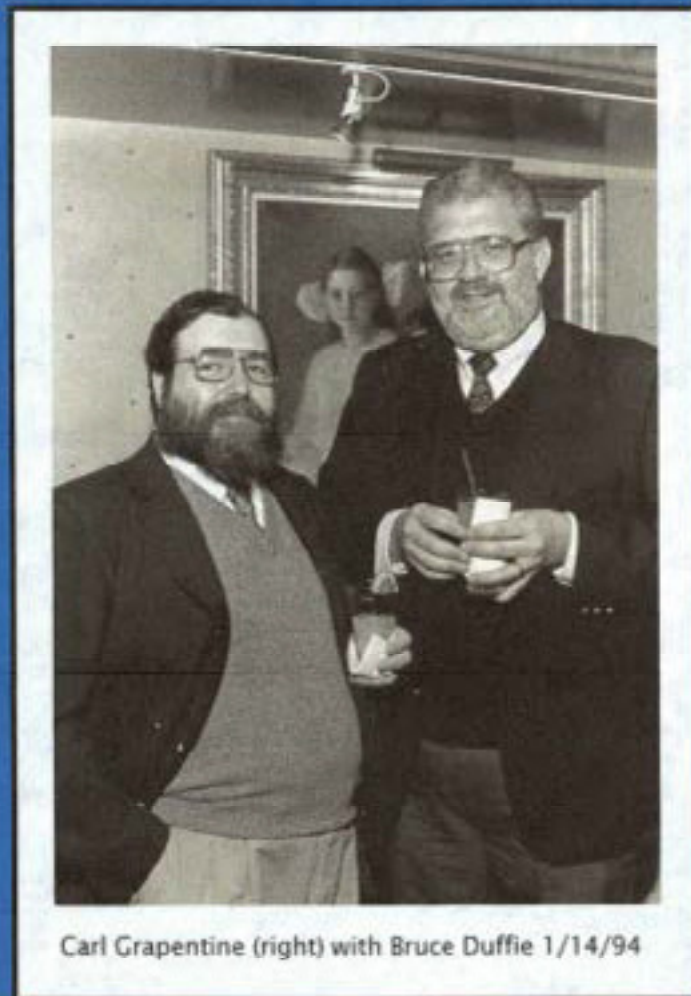


While in High School in Evanston, Illinois (1964-68), I participated in most of the musical groups. I sang in the various choruses and ensembles, and played bassoon in the bands and the orchestra. I was also the music librarian! The rehearsal rooms and music offices were next to the auditorium, and I truly lived at that end of the building. Upon graduation, they gave me a small plaque of appreciation — the first of its kind, and, to the best of my knowledge, still unique. [To see a photo, click [here](#).] It was a terrific experience. I learned a lot and it formed the basis for the rest of my life.

During that time, one of the band directors was a Michigan graduate, and he persuaded his old mentor, William Revelli, to come and be the guest conductor. Our director made it clear that we would not really appreciate this special event until much later, and that turned out to be the case. We played — presumably well — and continued with our lives and families and careers in many fields. It was, indeed, a great experience, but for us it was just another highlight. Only in retrospect do we now understand that this was more. It was a personal link to the wonder that is “The Band” in the very best sense.

At the end of July of 1991, Revelli appeared with the Wheaton, Illinois, Municipal Band for a concert which was filmed as part of a public television documentary about Sousa. While he was in the Chicago area, I had the opportunity to speak with him immediately after this event. As I set up the tape recorder, he asked if I knew Carl Grapentine, his own stadium announcer. I was glad to tell the conductor that Carl was on the staff of WNIB, Classical 97 (1990-1996), the station where I was employed (1975-2001). This pleased him, and he related a brief story...

*Carl was an oboe in my band when we went to Europe my last year. I auditioned him for the job, and for announcing at our stadium. The way I do that is to have them go up into*



Carl Grapentine (right) with Bruce Duffie 1/14/94

*the stadium while I stand down on the fifty yard line and have him announce as I listen. We had five of them try out, and after he come on I listened to the other two [laughs] but I'd already said, "This is the voice I want." He's a good boy.*

Revelli retired from Michigan in 1971, but as I put together this website presentation (2013), Carl still goes back on Saturdays during the football season to do the announcing.

Besides Sousa and other band-specific topics, Revelli spoke with me about many things. Here is that conversation . . . . .

**Bruce Duffie:** With the great popularity of bands in high schools and colleges all over the country, why are there no professional bands, like there are professional symphony orchestras?

**William Revelli:** You're absolutely right in that there aren't any. There was a time when we had the Sousa Band, but during that time there were other fine professional bands that people don't talk about. They weren't as popular as the Sousa Band, but the predecessor was Patrick Gilmore. He was called "The Irish Orpheus." He had a

larger band than Sousa had and he traveled all over the world with it. In fact, he was also a tremendous showman. In Boston Commons, down in the commons there, he had a festival with a two thousand piece band. There were over a thousand anvils from the fire department and everything else in Boston doing "The Anvil Chorus" from *Il Trovatore*. This is the kind of showman he was. He built a big palladium for his concerts, but it flopped. People didn't come. I don't know why that was, and I believe finally it burned down. That was the predecessor of Sousa. Then during Sousa's later years there was Patrick Conway, Creatore, Innes, and Liberati. They were about forty-five or fifty-piece bands that traveled all over the United States. They never went to Europe, but Sousa made five or six world tours with his band. People don't know about that.

**BD:** Why do we remember Sousa and not these others?

**WR:** His marches. They played Sousa marches.

**BD:** And also transcriptions?

**WR:** Yes, oh yes. Sousa played transcriptions almost exclusively because there wasn't any original band music except his own. There is a little story about when he played the first performance of *The Victors* march by Louis Elbel. Sousa and his band were there to do a concert on campus and the composer gave

him the parts. He played it that night, and the composer says Sousa said, "It was the third greatest march ever written." Elbel asked, "What about the other two?" and Sousa said, "Well, I wrote those." [Both laugh] It's a little story, but he did like the march. Sousa was never like "The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Conductor," or "The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, Conductor." It was "Sousa and his band." Now psychologically that may not mean much to you, but it does, because it was not "The Sousa Band." Sousa was first. You went to hear Sousa and his band.



**BD:** Did he want it that way?

**WR:** You bet he did! In fact, his first band was not "Sousa and his Band." His first band was "The Sousa Band, John Philip Sousa, Conductor." Blakeley, who was his manager, was a very astute man. John Philip Sousa can give great credit to Mr. Blakely, believe me! He was a Barnum. He knew how to sell, and he did. Sousa listened to him, too, believe me. I don't think Sousa himself could have done that. I often thought that Dr. Goldman, with the Goldman Band, made a mistake by trying to do it himself. He never had a manager that sold the Goldman Band. He did it himself. But if he'd had a Blakeley, he could have done it.

**BD:** Is this what you spent thirty-six years in Michigan doing — selling band music?

**WR:** Well, indirectly. By that I mean every single student that I conducted that was a music major that went out to conduct high school bands or trade school bands, junior high bands, college bands. I was a disciple, in a way, for bands and band music and better band music. So I think yes, that indirectly I am responsible for a great emphasis in the band world. I'm bragging a bit, but I'm doing it because I believe in it. We have, for instance, the American Bandmasters Association, which is a very elite group of band conductors. You cannot apply for admission to it. You have to be nominated and elected to it, and it's pretty severe. And there's more Michigan men who have succeeded in becoming members of the ABA than any other. There are more university band directors in America that are from Michigan. We sold the band program — not municipal bands but college bands. To answer your question about where are the professional bands, there aren't any. There were in those days. One of the few remaining professional bands that no longer has a budget was the Long Beach Band which Herb Clarke conducted for years. He was the solo cornetist for the Sousa Band for many years, and assistant conductor for Sousa. If you ask me why they are no more, it's money. I ask you why is there only one symphony orchestra in New York City?

**BD:** But there IS a symphony, and there are chamber groups and opera companies, but no band!

**WR:** No, not since the Goldman Band. There's nobody to fund it.

**BD:** Should we try to get this kind of thing going?

**WR:** Yes we certainly should, and tonight was an example of the image of what I could see as the true municipal band. Those people had a great night of enjoyment. They appreciated it. That was evidenced by their response. They had a good time.



**BD:** So now you have automatically two thousand band boosters right there.

**WR:** Exactly. We need that in the United States; we need ten thousand Wheatons. You'd be surprised... I don't know if you're aware of it, but the revival of the community band is astonishing. For instance, let's take Michigan alone. Ten years ago there weren't more than four or five community bands in the state of Michigan that you'd want to hear. Today there's fifty.

**BD:** Now you say "that you want to hear." In other words, they've gotten up to a certain level?

**WR:** Their performance standard is such that you enjoy going to the concert and it's not claptrap. The concert this evening had some very good repertoire in it. The young college band director is averse to doing transcriptions. They want original material and I'm for that, but because it's new and original doesn't mean it's good, or that old music is bad.

**BD:** Shouldn't there be a balance of some new things and some transcriptions?

**WR:** Of course. Now you're talking! You see, back in Sousa's day ninety per cent of the music was transcriptions because there wasn't any original band music. The only band music that you found that was original was his! He didn't just write marches; he wrote suites.

**BD:** Is there any kind of correlation between what Sousa did for the band and what Kreisler did for the violin?

**WR:** Very much so. That's a very good analogy with Kreisler. People, including me when I was a kid, went to hear his encores... *Schoen Rosemarie*, *Liebesfreud*, *Old Vienna* and all those little encores. [Begins to sing one of them softly] We went to hear them. It's like Horowitz. There was no way Horowitz could ever end a concert without playing *Traumerei*. There was no way he was going to get off that stage! Now, if you're going to play Sousa you'd better play *Stars and Stripes* because they're going to insist on it. Sousa was not only a legend, but he made a big contribution and will continue to do so. For instance, there's been thousands of marches written since Sousa died... thousands, and where are they? They are no different than the pop tunes that last three months.

**BD:** What is it about a Sousa march that lasts?

**WR:** It's not the form. It's a four-bar introduction to sixteen or thirty-two bars, a break-up strain and back again. It is sonata form. *Stars and Stripes* is the longest march he wrote. It has more measures in it than the rest of them. He wrote a melody that you could hear a couple of times and sing.

**BD:** But you don't get tired of it.

**WR:** Yes, because it's good. You bet. Rhythmically, harmonically, the structure of it; he was a master at putting the voices where they belong. Color. And he never once played them the way he wrote them. We

have men going around the country saying, "This is the way Sousa played his marches." They must have never heard him. I heard him twenty-six times! There's a young man here from the research center and he showed me some parts of an encore book of Sousa. There's Herbert Clarke's cornet part in which he says, "First strain, tacit." I've been doing that for fifty years! I was so proud to see that today because I've been doing that all along! Here was the original Herbert Clarke cornet part with the Sousa Band encore stating, "Tacit, first time, enter second time." That's all the editing. It's not written that way. For instance one time I heard the piccolo variation on the harp. I heard Bill Bell do it on the tuba with the Sousa Band. [Sings] He got the trills in there on his tuba clear as a bell! That was Sousa. He was never satisfied. I asked him if he would object to my editing his marches and he said, "Have you heard my band?" I said, "Twenty-six times." He was very abrupt at these kind of things and said, "Do I edit them?" I said, "You never play them the way they're written." He said, "Well, that's editing." Then he said, "As long as you don't change the melody and you don't change the harmony and you do not change the rhythm, you can do what you want with the color of it. If I like it, I'll accept it. If I don't, I'll tell you so." But he was constantly changing his ways of presenting the color.

\* \* \* \* \*

**BD:** What advice do you have for someone who wants to write music for the concert band?

**WR:** My first advice would be to write music, the score, for the public that appreciates what the band audiences understand, and which they will receive and accept. Now let me explain what I'm saying. There's a lot of wonderful contemporary music being written. Unfortunately, it's not accepted by the public.

**BD:** Because of its density?

**WR:** Its complication. It's complicated. I ask you, how many new operas will have been presented by the Metropolitan in the last decade?

**BD:** Very few at the Met, but hundreds in Europe. They're much more experimental over there.

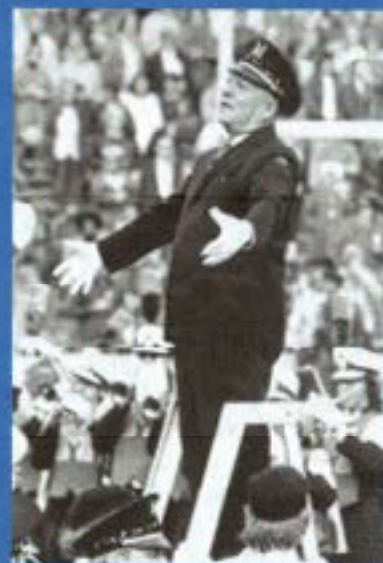
**WR:** They sure are. Not only that, they have the money to do it.

**BD:** That's true. State subsidy.

**WR:** You bet! The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra is eighty-five per cent subsidized by the government. How much does the New York Philharmonic get? Zero from the government.

**BD:** Maybe one per cent from the National Endowment, and that's it.

**WR:** That's right, and that's being cut considerably. So there's the difference. It's the sense of values. There are more little small town opera companies that you don't particularly enjoy all the time. [Laughs] They're broken down singers of the past or they're aspiring young artists with a little tiny orchestra in the pit, but they're still playing Verdi and *Aida* and so on. The Italians were brought up on that; that's their history, whereas in Germany it was Beethoven and Brahms, and in Russia it was Tchaikovsky and so on.



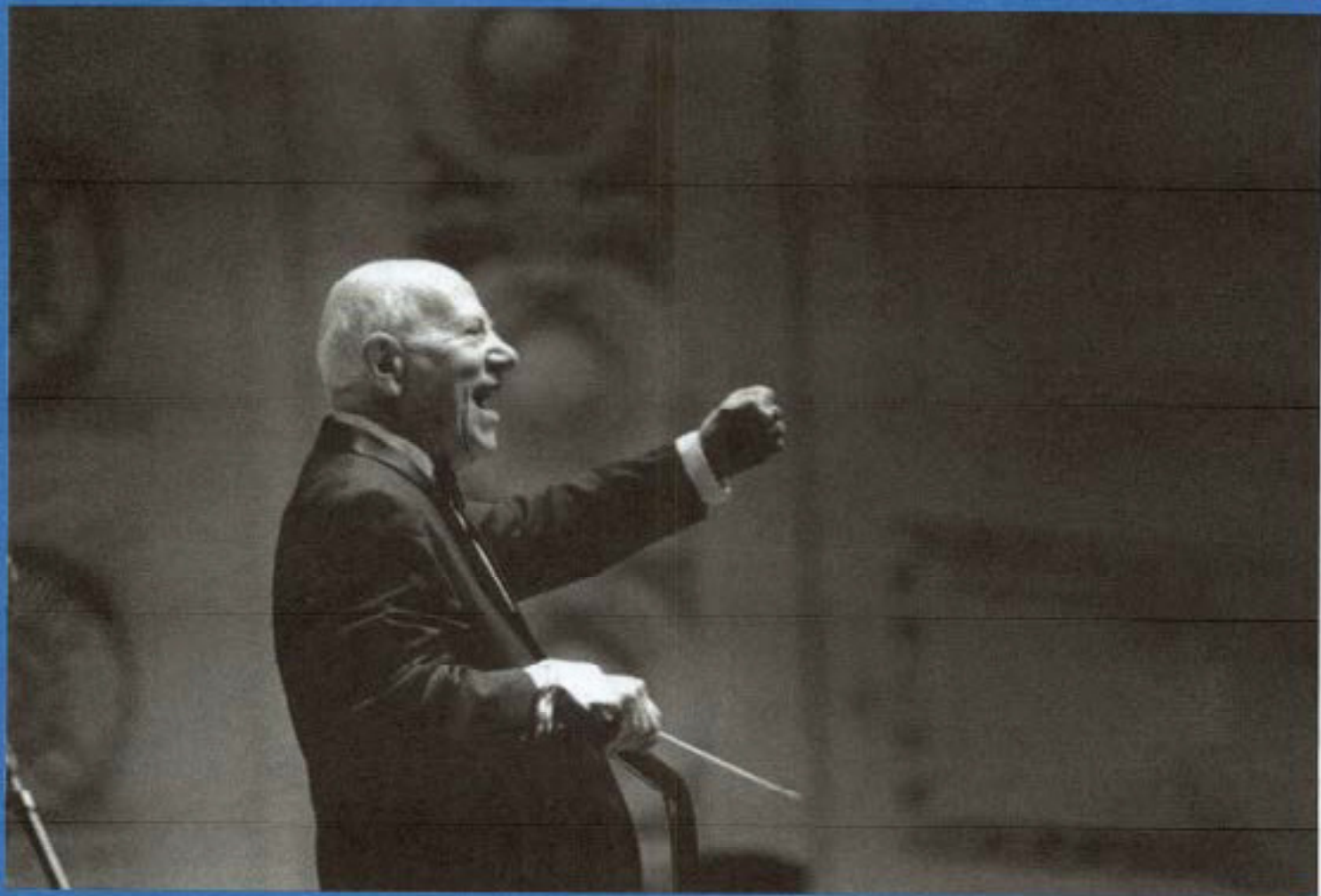
But the band, the voice of the band is truly Americana since the Revolutionary War. It's rather interesting, too, that where the band really began was in the New England states. I don't like to say it, but it's a fact that the worst bands in schools in the United States are where the band was born, in New England. They don't support it.

**BD:** You're talking about support and what you think is important. Let me ask the great big philosophical question — what is the purpose of music in society?

**WR:** I think it has three or four purposes. One of the handicaps for the band is it has become traditionally known as an entertaining medium because of its tremendous versatility. Unlike the orchestra, the band can play in all kinds of occasions. It can march, it can play for the Fourth of July Celebration parade, it can play for a military parade, it can play at a gridiron, it can play in a basketball tournament, it can play in at a hockey game, they can play everywhere. That's number one. It's an entertainment kind of a medium. In fact, take the high schools. Many times they threaten to take out the band and sports. The band's been related to sports, and that always hurts me. I said, "What's it got to do with sports?" Well, because it plays at the half-time, and the people'll say, "We won't have a band for halftime! We've got to have a band!" That was one point. The other is the educational features of it. It has tremendous educational value. I've been to Japan three times and helped them get their band started. You want to watch this program in Japan. It's coming. They don't just make Sonys and Yamaha motorcycles and so on. They're spending a tremendous amount of money on the youth and music in Japan, in the public schools! So the purposes and the objectives of the band program are many. Let's take an example. School starts in September. What's the band director's first obligation? To get that band ready for that first football game! He better have it there! The board of education and administration say, "You will have it there." When I went to Hobart, Indiana, they'd never had a band and no instrumental program at all. I went to the superintendent, Mr. Dickey, after school had started a couple of weeks and asked his permission to organize an instrumental program. Now he was a Hoosier, brought up in Hoosier-land and he said, "We have some problems. Number one is that there's no place to rehearse. Every room's taken with classes. The schedule's already made, so there's no time for rehearsal. Classes are scheduled. And there's no budget." But he said, "Go right ahead. If you can get it started, find a place to rehearse, find a time for rehearsals, you have my permission to begin." He added, "By the way, I think it would be wonderful." Now this is an educator, a superintendent, who said "I think it would be wonderful if we could have five or six kids play for the basketball games." That's his concept of what music education was about! I went out of his office quite disappointed. Finally I said, "Wait a minute. You got what you asked for. He gave you his blessing to start it." We rehearse at seven o'clock in the morning in the chemistry lab because the professor and a teacher of chemistry was a good friend of mine. We had to move everything out and put it back, and oh God get every instrument out of the attic and rent some others from the Chicago Instrument Company. But we got started. That's the way we started! Remember, while you're out on a gridiron getting that band ready for that first game, the orchestra conductor's already got the orchestra in the rehearsal room playing, maybe, a Beethoven symphony or a Haydn symphony — or whatever — so, education-wise, the band has been at a disadvantage. Its very versatility has been its greatest enemy. Because it can do everything in so many places, they use it. It's a window-dresser for the community!

**BD:** Where should the balance be, then, between the entertainment and some kind of artistic achievement?

**WR:** That's a good question, and the answer is that if the conductor is truly a serious musician and he's



an educator, he will have both. There's no reason in the world that a football band has to play badly. That's the conductor's responsibility. My men — and women, later — in the Michigan marching band hated my guts when I would work them hard before the last game of the season. We're playing on national television the next day and we hadn't been through the show once completely without stopping. It's snowing, it's cold, it's the last game and Revelli's stopping that band and tuning it and trying to get it together! They're frozen! They're so cold, the valves are cold, their fingers are cold, and Revelli's saying, "The third cornet, let's hear you." They said, "This guy's impossible!" Then we would play and the audience would receive us they way they did, and they were so proud. They knew it was good. Then Revelli was okay, you see. So that was that. There you are. I told them, "The C-natural on your trumpet, half-note, forte, is no different; you don't read it any different, you don't play it any differently than you would if you were playing with the symphony at Carnegie Hall." You've got to approach it that way. You don't just blow your brains out on a gridiron because everybody's up, up, up, rah, rah, rah. I don't go for that. The tone of my concert band and the symphony band, at least the objective was not different. It was educational all the way down the line. I know so many bands just blow, you know. There's no musicianship about it, not even the intent at being musical.

**BD:** So is this your advice, then, for people who want to conduct bands, is to be musicians first?

**WR:** First, yes. In fact, I would like to see that the emphasis in the music education field be placed upon performance for four years. Every one of these band conductors would go through a very rigid



performance program. I did it. I never got a music education degree until after I had my performance degree. I played seven years professionally before I ever took a course in music education. I passed about nine-tenths of the courses for music ed without even going to class. I took the exams for placement on performance, playing, history and theory. I never had any problems with that.

**BD:** You started out on violin.

**WR:** I am a violinist. I never played anything else. Sousa was a violinist.

**BD:** [With a gentle nudge] Then why didn't you organize the world's greatest string quartet instead of the world's greatest band?

**WR:** [With a big smile] Because I love the band.

**BD:** They why didn't you play cornet?

**WR:** I didn't think that made any difference. Fact of the matter is, let me ask you what is Solti's background? [See my [Interviews with Sir Georg Solti.](#)]

**BD:** Piano

**WR:** Well, why didn't he play a violin? He's an orchestra conductor. Why was he a pianist? What is the difference? What was Toscanini? He was a cellist. Saul Caston, conductor of the Denver Symphony was a trumpet player. [As if giving the interviewer an oral exam] What was Eugene Ormandy?

**BD:** [Responding correctly] A violinist, I believe.

**WR:** Where'd he play?

**BD:** He started in Hungary.

**WR:** Right. He had a manager that came over to the U.S. and told him he had a big concert tour, but he never had a date. Gene couldn't find a place to play, so he auditioned for the Capitol Theater where a friend of his was conductor. He never played first violin in any major orchestra. I think that first of all a conductor has to be a good musician. I don't think you can be a bad musician and be a good conductor. There are many, many wonderful musicians who would be awful conductors and vice versa. Why is it that with all the great violinists we have in the major orchestras, who've had twenty-five years experience of playing every symphony in the repertoire, why aren't they conductors? You can use another analogy — some of the greatest baseball players became awful managers. They were flops. Bob Zuppke never played a football game, but he was just one of the great coaches of Illinois. Fielding H. Yost was never a great player. He never played football very much. Conducting is a talent. There are so many areas of conducting that you've got to be a good musician. You've got to have an ear, for instance. You have to have a good ear to be a conductor. If you've got a bad ear, forget it! [Both laugh] And I've had folks like that. I wish I could conduct with the stick like they did, but they can't hear anything. God, the band plays all out of tune and they're making beautiful motions. I had a student in my conducting class who wouldn't believe this. He was a kind of an ego, and he made the most beautiful gestures. [Demonstrates] So I thought, how am I going to reach this guy? He had an ear like a sock. He can't hear anything! I have to

reach him. I have to make him believe. So I deliberately had the oboe player play the English Horn part. The oboe's in C and the English horn's in F, so it's a fourth off. He played the whole solo and the guy was conducting. When he got all through, I said, "Tell me what was wrong with this." "Well, I thought they didn't make enough crescendo here. I thought they—" I said, "Now just hold everything. I don't want to do this..." but I did it. "It's about time you realized where your weaknesses are. We've got to do something about it. He's playing the English Horn part. He's a fourth off. Every C he played was an F, and you never heard it. You played accompaniment underneath it. It was awful!"

**BD:** Did he fix his problem or is he selling insurance now?

**WR:** Well, he's not selling insurance, but he's not in music. He's done very well, incidentally. I'm guilty of changing some students into the other professions. One is now a wonderful dentist. He's got some of the best clients in Cleveland there are. Big people. He was in music ed, but he had nothing.

**BD:** So you told him to get the heck out of music?

**WR:** Well, I didn't do it quite that way. I said, "I'm going to find out" because he was bright. So I went to the registrar and looked at his transcript. He had straight As in everything! Mathematics, history, English, so on, and he had Cs in music. No band director ever gives a C in music! They only know one letter in the alphabet, and it's A. Everybody gets an A! You get an A if you're there and if you can breathe. Anyway, I called him in and I said, "Let's have a talk here." He was a freshman so it was not too late. I said, "You don't have to quit. We've got seven bands, and this is a place for those kinds of bands. But I think it's time to switch before it's too late." That man has thanked me and sends me wonderful gifts at Christmas! He said, "Thank you, Dr. Revelli. When I think of what I might have been... such a misfit! I really wasn't that much interested in it anyway." Well, there you are. I was doing a clinic at Missouri and I got there a little early and the teachers in the high school were having their coffee break. I just couldn't find the band director, so I walked in and I asked if he was there. No, he wasn't there. I sat down and one of them started talking with me. I said, "What do you teach?" He said, "Math." I asked another one, and she taught English. I asked another one, and then one of them asked me, "What do you teach?" I said, "I teach people." You should have seen them. There were about ten of them and they all seemed to think, "Who is this nut? This guy is crazy." [Both laugh] Finally one said to me out loud, "What'd you say?" I said, "I teach people." "What do you mean?" he asked, and I said, "Well, through music. I happen to be a conductor and a teacher and a musician."

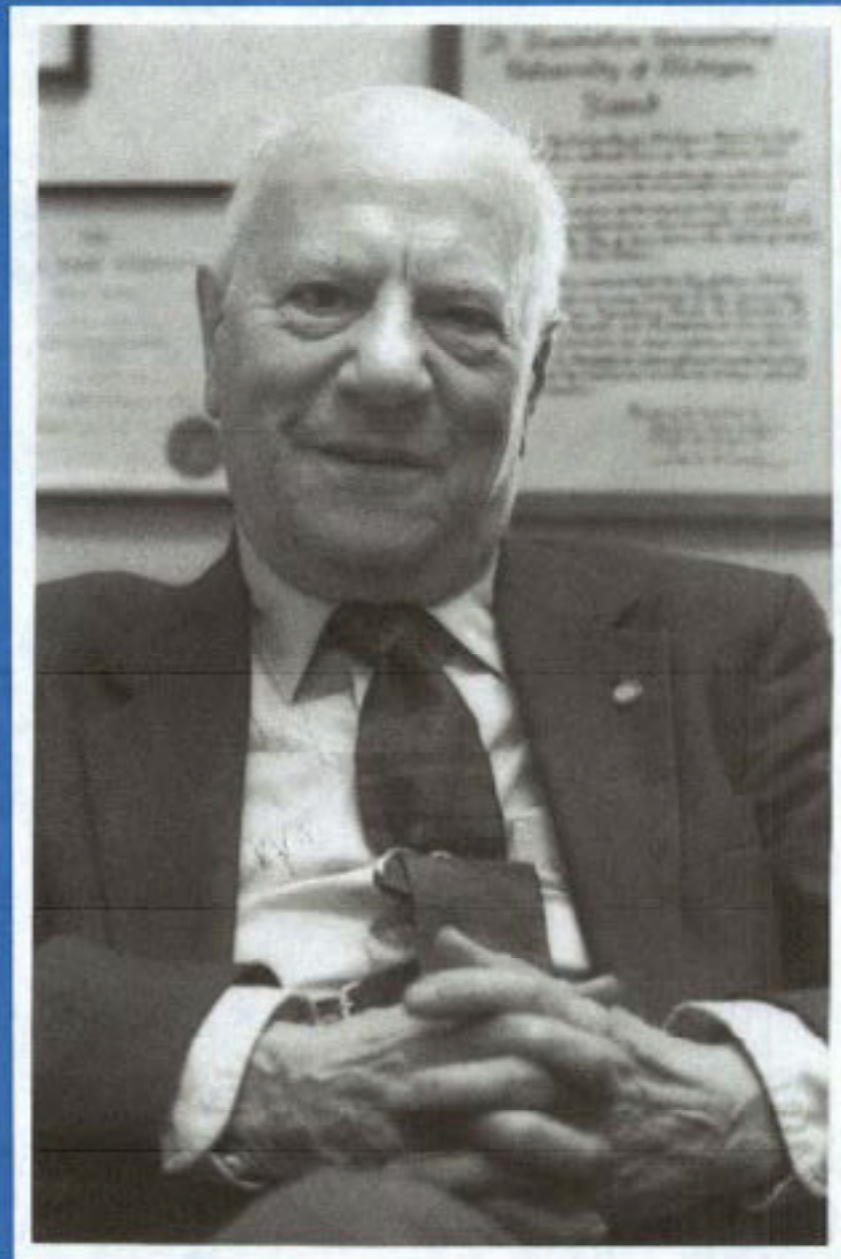
**BD:** Is that what you do every time you get on the podium — teach the people both in front of you and behind you?

**WR:** Every time. Every time. I am a teacher. Toscanini was the greatest teacher I've ever known.

\* \* \* \* \*

**BD:** Are you optimistic about the future of band music in America?

**WR:** I'm highly optimistic about it. I have never been more thrilled and more confident and overjoyed with what I see. I'm disappointed in many things in the music education field, and in the bands in the schools I am very disappointed, but more than ever in my life I'm convinced that music education is here to stay. I have yet to see one program that's good where they have curtailed it. But we have so many



mediocre ones. We have so many that are so bad, unfortunately, and they're the ones that are in jeopardy. There's too many of them.

**BD:** How is the burgeoning of electronic entertainment — the television and all of this — going to help or hinder the advancement of concert music and band music?

**WR:** Perhaps this may be one of the most crucial and vital areas that we must be concerned about. All you have to do is to go to Hollywood. I have friends who compose for the TV shows and what's happening is frightening. The musicians never even see each other. The strings never see the brass because they're in two different rooms and they're recorded at different times. It's the electronic age. It's unbelievable! I was in Toronto judging conducting last spring, and I happened to be in the restaurant to get breakfast. It was crowded, and the table where I was sitting was for two, and it was the only empty chair in the restaurant. A young Japanese man came in. He was looking and couldn't find a place to sit. So I said, "Sir, if you would like, you may join me. This seat is available." So he sat down and we got acquainted. He was very intelligent, about thirty-

five years-old and in the computer business. I've never met a more alert, intelligent, interesting, fascinating man. I said, "What a fascinating field you're in." "Yes," he says, "It's also the most competitive. How would you like to be president of a corporation that has a fifty million-dollar inventory that may be obsolete tomorrow morning? That's the field I'm in."

**BD:** Do you think the band will ever be obsolete?

**WR:** I don't think so any more than the orchestra would. Do you think that a singer will ever be obsolete? A singer like Pavarotti or Domingo, or whatever great singer?

**BD:** I hope not. [Laughs]

**WR:** Who's going to produce the original sound?

**BD:** Probably some electronic gizmo invented by the Japanese fellow that you had lunch with.

**WR:** That will duplicate the human voice?

**BD:** Right.

**WR:** Well, you could be right. We kept on talking. They also make synthesizers, so I told him about a guest-conducting engagement where I wanted to play a certain piece but the second oboe just wasn't good enough. I mentioned that to the Dean and he said, "We can fix that." He went over and got his arranger, a young man, a very sharp young fellow, and he sat at the synthesizer and played the second oboe part. He never missed a note. [Both laugh] He didn't have to worry about the reed, and all this stuff. It was in tune, and by golly there were times when I thought it was a real oboe! The one thing I missed was the nuance. It was a mechanical thing. I told the Japanese fellow about this and I said, "It's the one thing you haven't done yet, and you'll never be able to do it! You can't duplicate the human end of it. That's always going to be mechanical." He said, "In what way?" and I said, "Nuance. You can't do this on your synthesizer [sings]. You play [sings differently]." He said, "That's what you think. We already have it. We can do that. We've already done it with the greatest singers. We recorded them and then we put it on the synthesizer and followed it. We do it by frequency. We add the frequency to it and it goes up, and we reduce it and it comes up and down. You will never know the difference." That worried me. I said, "Oh, my God, really? Why don't you have it out?" He said, "Because we have a fifty million dollar inventory we've got to sell." He told me the designs on the table were already in for the year 2000, and they're not like this 1991 model. They've got to sell the old things first. Their plants are all set up for this and it would cost millions of dollars to re-tool, to say nothing of the existing inventory. They'll sell the old ones out and then the new model will come in. That's gradual, as long as that inventory is there. I learned a lot from that young man. So in response to your question, I don't think anyone can forecast this. Would you believe fifteen years ago what's happened in the CDs?

**BD:** Of course not.

**WR:** Of course not. The recording industry is about shot. Who buys records now?

**BD:** Well, the long-playing records are gone. The compact disks are current.

**WR:** Yeah, but I've got an inventory of these. I don't know what's going to happen to those. They'll probably become collector's items someday.

**BD:** We still have the LPs and we still can play them on the radio, so I've got to make sure we can always play those.

**WR:** But do you think ten years from now you'll be doing that?

**BD:** I hope so.

**WR:** But do you think so?

**BD:** [Shrugs] Flip a coin.

**WR:** Well, that's the same way with music. Will a symphony orchestra be around in the year 2500? What's it going to be? Where will bands be? Where will education be? The one thing that the band has is the appeal to the common man, and there are more common men than there are uncommon men and women. Tonight the greatest thrill to me was that audience. That was even greater than the performance. I mean it. How many people were there? Pretty close to two thousand, maybe more. It was a big crowd and I watched it. When I conduct I watch. I look at the faces and I saw what I wanted to see. I saw the smile. I saw the receptivity. I saw the enjoyment. I saw the attitude of receptivity and it was genuine. It wasn't because it's polite, which some people do when they go to opera. That's Americana, so I have great faith in the future of the band. I think the destiny of it lies in the hands of the conductors, not the players. The players are there. There are thousands. About a half a dozen came to me after the concert and said that they played in the high school band and they're still playing. Granted, the majority of the students that graduate from universities never touch their instruments again...

**BD:** ...but hopefully, they come to concerts!

**WR:** That's another thing, and that's encouraging.

## Legendary Band Leader William Revelli

July 20, 1994

By Knight-Ridder *Tribune*. [Text only - photo added]

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — When the University of Michigan band marched under William Revelli, the lines of musicians had to be straight and smart, the music clear and sharp. Nothing but perfection was good enough.

Mr. Revelli's ability to accomplish that made him a legend in American band music.

"It's very difficult to talk about Bill Revelli except in superlatives," said Allen Britton, dean emeritus of the Michigan School of Music. "He developed the U-M bands into the best in the country. Nothing ever sounded like a Revelli band except a Revelli band."

Mr. Revelli, who retired in 1972 after 36 years as band director, died of heart failure Saturday at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital near Ann Arbor. He was 92.

He remained active on campus and accepted engagements as guest conductor for bands around the world.

He was inducted into the National Band Association Hall of Fame of distinguished conductors in 1981.

In 1989, the Louis Sudler Foundation and the John Philip Sousa Foundation presented him with their Order of Merit.

He was a "Mt. Rushmore figure" in his field, said professor H. Robert Reynolds, a former student who succeeded him as band director in 1975 and continues in the position.

"He was single-handedly responsible for raising the standards everywhere," Reynolds said. "He had a popularity with the general public that was unique, while he was highly respected by the band profession. . . . He deserves to be remembered forever."

Mr. Revelli studied violin and music theory at the Beethoven Conservatory of Music in St. Louis and later the Chicago Musical College and the VanderCook School of Music in Chicago.

His drive for excellence showed early in his career, when he led the band at Hobart (Ind.) High School to six national high school championships from 1929 to 1935.

In 1935, he moved to Michigan as director of bands, including the symphony band, with which he toured nationally.

In 1961, he led the symphony band on a 16-week international tour sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

Survivors include two grandchildren, John Strong and Kimberly Snyder, and two great-grandchildren.



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This interview was recorded at his hotel on August 1, 1991. Segments were used (with recordings) on WNIB in 1992 and 1997. The transcription was made and posted on this website in 2013.

To see a full list (with links) of interviews which have been transcribed and posted on this website, [click here](#).

[Award](#) - winning broadcaster Bruce Duffie was with **WNIB, Classical 97** in Chicago from 1975 until its final moment as a classical station in February of 2001. His interviews have also appeared in various magazines and journals since 1980, and he now continues his broadcast series on **WNUR-FM**, as well as on **Contemporary Classical Internet Radio**.

You are invited to visit his [website](#) for more information about his work, including selected transcripts of other interviews, plus a full list of his guests. He would also like to call your attention to the photos and information about [his grandfather](#), who was a pioneer in the automotive field more than a century ago. You may also send him [E-Mail](#) with comments, questions and suggestions.

William Revelli loved to boast, “I was born in a ghost town!” On this day—February 12, 1902—William Revelli was born in Spring Gulch, Colorado. (Today, there is nothing to be found where Spring Gulch existed. A crossroads in the middle of nowhere. When the coal mine closed, the town was abandoned.)

In 1886, William’s father, Giovanni Battista Revelli, immigrated to the U.S. from Italy when he was 16 years old. Giovanni’s father was an affluent stock rancher in Ponte Canades, near Torino, Italy. His father wanted Giovanni to become a priest. Like many young Italians in the 19th century, Giovanni heard and believed stories that America was the land of opportunity and the streets were paved with gold. Like many Italian immigrants, Giovanni (now “John”) found work as a miner. John moved to wherever work could be found, including the iron ore mines of Ishpeming and Calumet, Michigan. Then, John moved to Coal City, Illinois, where he became a coal miner. In Coal City, he met Rosa Bonino and married her in 1897. (Rosa came to America with her family when she was two years old.) Two children were born to John and Rosa while in Coal City—Adelina and John. In 1901, the family moved to Spring Gulch, Colorado, where a new mine offered good-paying jobs. The town was brand new when the Revelli family moved there. It was while the Revelli family lived in Spring Gulch when William was born and was baptized “Guglielmo Domenico.” But the family called him Willy.

In 1904, the Revelli family moved again. This time, John was offered a job as a foreman in a new coal mine that opened in Panama, Illinois. The town was brand new; it did not exist when Willy was born! While in Panama, three more children were born to John and Rosa—Melvin, Norma, and Lorena.

Willy Revelli lived in Panama until he graduated from high school.

In the picture, Willy--dressed in the skirt--is third from the right. Standing behind Willy is his father, John. To the left of Willy are his older brother--John, sister--Adelina, and mother--Rosa.



# REVELLI: THE LONG NOTE

BY KIM CLARKE

“ You are not a conductor of bands, you’re a conductor of people. ”

– WILLIAM D. REVELLI

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## CHAPTER 1

# THE MAESTRO

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**H**e is an old man, with creases at his eyes and white, thinning hair. He appears particularly small, even for someone who never stood more than 5'7".

He is in the autumn of his years in 1992. All eyes are on him as he crosses the Hill Auditorium stage in a slow but determined walk. Steps on the podium. Lifts his arms. Readies the baton.

*The world is suddenly young again.*

*The unmistakable, joyful noise of a Sousa march is splendid and bursting with life. Flutes and clarinets dance above their brassy counterparts. The snare drum is crisp and efficient. The music races and slows, soars and dips like a roller coaster ride.*

*The guest conductor is William Revelli, legendary leader of the University of Michigan Bands, a pioneer in American music education, and a John Philip Sousa acolyte.*

*He is directing "The George Washington Bicentennial March," the last work of the March King. It is a personal favorite—difficult to play, but so worth the effort.*

*In conducting his hero's final composition, Revelli is making his last appearance at Hill, a place where he first set foot 56 years ago as a junior professor just handed an anemic college band.*

\* \* \*

Certain names connote leadership, at Michigan and beyond: Tappan. Angell. Yost. Bo.

Revelli.

His love of teaching, his belief that music is as sustaining as water and oxygen, and his unrelenting drive for perfection resonate long after his final note.



Dr. William Revelli was guest conductor for Keith Brion and the New Sousa Band during an October 1992 performance at Hill Auditorium.

*Image: Ann Arbor District Library*

Michigan's bands grew from one to seven during his tenure. His methods shaped band pedagogy from middle school through college. He built the Wind Instrument Department into one of the strongest in the country. His faith in students carried them across the country and around the globe, exposing them to different cultures and showcasing the University of Michigan to the world.

Michigan traditions—a high-stepping marching band, pep bands, colorful halftime shows, Band-O-Rama, symphony tours—all have their roots in Revelli.

His demands (“Stop conducting me!”), his exasperation (“Why don’t you get a hammer and be done with it?”), and his encouragement (“Be dedicated in whatever you do—even if it’s kissing your girl goodnight”) ring in alumni ears generations after graduating.

At the core of it all was his credo: “We do not teach music. Rather, we teach people through music.”

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## CHAPTER 2

# A BOY AND HIS VIOLIN

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**I**t's a pitch-black Sunday morning in 1909 and 7-year-old Willie Revelli is standing along the railroad tracks in the tiny Illinois coal town of Panama. In the distance, a train's whistle sings. Willie snaps on his flashlight, raises his arm, and flags down the massive locomotive.

*In his other hand is his precious violin. It is the only instrument he ever wanted, and he wasn't yet 5 when he began begging his parents for one.*

*“My dad put it right beside my bed on a stand and when I woke up Christmas morning, there was my violin! The first thing I wanted to do was play; of course all I could do was scratch around. I didn't know how to hold the bow or anything.”*

*This is why he waits at the train station in the dark. Wake up every Sunday morning at 4:30, catch the eye of the engineer, hop aboard The Limited, and ride four hours to the big city of St. Louis. There, he meets with the concertmaster of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for a 45-minute violin lesson, followed by free time and the return trip to Panama. He arrives home after 9 p.m.*

*He does this every Sunday, every month, for 10 years.*

\* \* \*

Giovanni Revelli wanted his son to have the best and be the best; he was “a person who liked things done well.” He loved the music of his native Italy, the arias and libretto of opera. His wife, Rose, sang the Italian folk songs she heard growing up. Together, they gave six children their first lessons in music.

As a boy not yet 10, Willie Revelli saw John Philip Sousa and his band at the Illinois State Fair. He could not believe the sheer majesty of what he was hearing.

“Sousa's band hadn't played two minutes and I knew that's what I wanted to do,” he once told an interviewer. “I said, ‘Dad, I want to be a conductor like Mr. Sousa.’”

He stood apart from his classmates (“I was kind of a funny kid”). As if the weekly train treks to St. Louis weren't exotic enough, he spent summers traveling with a Chautauqua orchestra through Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Kansas. During the school year, he played in the pit orchestra of his father's silent movie theater.

He practiced his violin constantly; he'd rather practice than play outside, unless maybe there was a game of baseball he could join. He played a little high school basketball, until a teacher warned that sprained or broken fingers could cripple his musical aspirations.

"My upbringing was one of seriousness of purpose. I wasn't fooling around just to have music as an avocation but rather to look at it as an experience that would be lifelong."

Panama was a mining town, and he had no intention of spending a lifetime underground, in the dark and danger of the earth. After high school, he moved north and enrolled at the Chicago Musical College (today the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University).

His instructor was Leon Sametini, an exceptional violinist known for being difficult and demanding. When he wasn't working to meet Sametini's standards, Revelli was playing violin in dance orchestras in Chicago, Joliet and St. Louis. In particular he performed with Isham Jones, a popular dance bandleader in the Loop who, like Sametini, was a real stickler.

Giovanni Revelli. Leon Sametini. Isham Jones. All perfectionists. All teachers.

Bachelor's degree in hand, William Revelli was about to embark on his career and cultivate his own reputation as both bandleader and taskmaster.



The Panama, Ill., depot, where young William Revelli regularly boarded a train for music lessons in St. Louis, Mo.

*Image: Historical Society of Montgomery County, Illinois*  
[\(http://history.montgomeryco.com/\)](http://history.montgomeryco.com/)



Revelli and his violin, circa 1924.

*Image: William D. Revelli Papers 1907 - 1994, Bentley Library*  
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umiclib/141630919/focusrgn=C02:subview=standard>

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### CHAPTER 3

# HOBART HIGH SCHOOL

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**T**he new music teacher is Mr. Revelli and he barely looks old enough to be out of high school himself.

But here is he, 23 years old in 1925, huddled in the chemistry lab of Indiana's tiny Hobart High School, with a handful of anxious students who say they want to be in a band.

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None of them has ever touched a musical instrument.

He himself has never played in a band; concert bands don't use violinists.

The school superintendent made it clear to his new hire: There is no budget, no rehearsal space, no equipment. And there certainly isn't time during the school day for band class.

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Concert and marching bands—staples of today's K-12 system and colleges—were an American phenomenon of the 1920s. In the wake of the Great War, the public embraced patriotism and pomp, along with music performed live at silent movies and spread by the phonograph. A growing middle class preferred band music rather than fussier orchestras. The advent of talking pictures brought unemployment to orchestra pits, driving professional musicians to Hollywood, radio—and teaching.

The school band movement was under way.

At Hobart High School, Revelli's official duties called for him to teach vocal music—all grades, kindergarten through 12th grade—as well as conduct several school choirs and a glee club. Within his first month on the job, he received permission to develop a band program.

The students honked and squeaked and generally crashed through the music. There were not enough players to form a full concert band; they performed minus flutes, oboes, timpani and several other standard instruments. He called it "mess production."

Still, Hobart parents were keen to hear their young prodigies.

"I had mothers calling and asking me when their child was going to bring his or her instrument home. I used to say, 'You know, Mrs. Maybaum, you don't know how lucky you are. I have to listen to him, you don't. You should be thankful.'"

He was an advocate of *solfeggio*—the practice of singing the printed notes ("do," re," mi"). Hobart students would hear the same refrain issued over and over to Michigan students 10, 20 and 30 years later: "If you can't sing it, you can't play it."

He also realized his own need to evolve musically, and learned to play trombone, flute, bassoon, trumpet, and more from members of the Chicago Symphony. He took a similar tack with students, teaching them several instruments so they could appreciate an entire body of work. He also arranged for private lessons between his students and professionals, just as his father did when he was 7 years old.

He demanded, and expected, excellence. During one frustrating band practice, he threw down his baton and told the students to get out, just go home. He wouldn't conduct them if they were the last band on earth. He stormed out of the room.

Stunned, the students did not move. No one said a word. Ten minutes passed before Revelli returned, picked up his baton, and resumed the rehearsal.

He could not deny how much they energized him. He loved watching them express themselves through music.

"They made my day. Anytime I was down, all I had to do was give a lesson, and those kids pulled me right out of it."

In return, they played their hearts out, for their teacher and their town. The growing school band movement led to state and national competitions, and Hobart High School matured into the best, period.

Said one judge: "The conductor evidently seeks clarity, thoroughness, and musical performance of every tone more than general impressionistic effect. Either as a conscious technique or because of full participation in the mood, these players bring a wider range of color out of their respective instruments than is ordinarily heard."



John Philip Sousa was conductor of the U.S. Marine Band. After being honorably discharged in 1892, he created his own band, which crisscrossed the country for decades.

Image: Library of Congress, Music Division

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During one frustrating band practice, he threw down his baton and told the students to get out, just go home. He wouldn't conduct them if they were the last band on earth.

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When Hobart won its first national championship, in 1930, one of the judges was the great man himself, John Philip Sousa. Revelli all but ran to accept the award.

For five straight years, the Hobart band reigned as finest in the country.

With each national title, Revelli's reputation grew; professional symphonies, colleges and bigger high schools pursued him. Michigan State came calling, but he felt the school was too small. Wisconsin had him all but moved to Madison, but he changed his mind. "I wanted to make one move and I wanted it to be the right one."

That right one was Michigan.

In his final Hobart concert, Revelli led students he had groomed since fourth grade. They were his instrument. Closing with "Auld Lang Syne," tears fell down their faces. One after another, kids couldn't play through their crying. Mr. Revelli himself blinked back tears.

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#### CHAPTER 4

## THE TONE, THE TONE, THE TONE

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**I**t is the fall of 1935, and Bill Revelli is settling into his junior faculty position. As he does every Tuesday night as the new chair of Michigan's Wind Instrument Department, he is holding the weekly faculty meeting.

Morris Hall is a 19th century house at the corner of South State and Jefferson. What once was the second-floor master bedroom now houses the Wind Department and its meeting. Afterward, Revelli writes up notes for the dean.

*"Professor Revelli, chairman of the wind instrument department, called a meeting. All were present. After considerable discussion, it was unanimously agreed that we had to do some things ..."*

*The dean finds the minutes particularly amusing, and forwards them to other faculty. Chairman Revelli, after all, is a department of one.*

\* \* \*

Revelli took a significant pay cut to come to Michigan from Hobart. The band program he inherited was even poorer.

"The Michigan band, in 1935, couldn't turn pages for my Hobart band."

His predecessor had resigned two years earlier, leaving a graduate student to hold the band together. Students arrived late for rehearsal. They smoked before, during and after practice. They were cocky but had no reason to be. It made Revelli crazy.

"That's the worst thing you can have: when you're not good and you think you are—there's nothing worse. Your receptivity to criticism is nil."

But just like at Hobart, he believed in the students. The program was a sleeping giant, and he was about to give it a good, hard kick.

"I'm totally dedicated to perfection and when it's 'just about right,' I'm unhappy. To me, that's like a pilot who misses the runway by 8 feet. You're dead; he's almost right."



The Michigan band program called Morris Hall its home when Revelli first arrived in Ann Arbor in 1935.

*Image: Available online in Bentley Image Bank and UM Photographs Vertical File 1850s - 1980s, Bentley Historical Library (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhl/x-b1001665/b1001665>)*

CHAPTER 5

# THE MARCHING BAND

**H**e is in full band regalia. White gloves, jacket, epaulets and a navy blue cap with the distinctive block "M." Before him sit dozens of freshmen, sheer brawn and muscle, the newest members of the Michigan football team. Coach Bo Schembechler is in his debut season, and the veteran band director has offered to help the team in any way he can.

*Teach my players the fight song, Schembechler asked.*

*The director steps up and stares hard at the athletes.*

*"JOHN PHILIP SOUSA CALLED THIS THE GREATEST FIGHT SONG EVER WRITTEN. AND YOU WILL SING IT WITH RESPECT."*

*Sing they do. Out of their chairs, standing and booming, "Hail! To the victors valiant. Hail! To the conqu'ring heroes. Hail! Hail!"*

*After his 1969 visit, Revelli is invited back every season.*

*"God," Schembechler will say years later, "he was beautiful."*

\* \* \*

In a way, William Revelli steps onto the field every time today's Michigan Marching Band pours out of the Michigan Stadium tunnel.

In his 36 years, Revelli revolutionized not only the Michigan style, but marching bands across the nation. The University of Illinois had been the first and best in the land, but Michigan soon stormed past under Revelli's baton.

He took over a band with roots in the ROTC and rote performance. He dropped the name "Michigan Fighting One Hundred" ("It didn't have any class to it") and launched the "Michigan Marching Band."

And he ranted.

*"I don't want it just about right! To me, just about right is terrible!"*

*"Mister, if you can't play that, what CAN you play?"*

*"It's all the fault of your high school band director."*

*"It goes from a college band to a high school band to a junior high band in four bars."*

He quickened the stride of players, who now took more steps to cover the same amount of yardage. Where the U.S. Army band took 120 steps a minute, the Michigan Marching Band packed in 176.



Revelli and the marching band's drum section in 1969.

*Image: William D. Revelli Papers 1907 - 1994, Bentley Library (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umiclib/byte=141630919;focuson=C02;subview=standard>)*

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**“I don't want it just about right! To me, just about right is terrible!”**

– WILLIAM D. REVELLI

”

He and his assistants introduced thematic halftime shows, abandoning performances that mimicked stiff military drills. The band took the shape of a turkey at Thanksgiving, or a car with spinning wheels, or stick figures traversing the field. ("I know it's hard—that's what makes it difficult!")

There was the time the first trombonist messed up and began marching in the opposite direction. Absolute wrong direction in front of thousands of fans. While he wandered off, the rest of the band marched away in formation. Eventually, everyone reunited, but not before the trombonist took advantage of his single status and hammed it up for the crowd.

What in the world were you thinking? Revelli demanded to know afterward.

"He said, 'I don't know, my mind just went blank.' I slapped him on the back and said, 'Some day you're going to be dean of a music school.'"

Perhaps his most significant contribution was the sound and song of the band itself. He wanted his marching band to sound like a symphonic band that just happened to be on a football field.

"Don't come up and tell me the Michigan band looked good; I don't like that kind of compliment. But if you say they looked great and they sounded terrific, I'll accept that compliment."

That meant exceptional tone. "Even if it was November and snow was coming down, I stopped that band if there was a bad sound. I did it a million times. I didn't care if the game was the next day. What I did care about was their sound—right now! I want a good tone!"

He mixed popular music with classical works—Bach, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky—before thousands of football devotees. He introduced Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D minor," a famous composition typically associated with organ. "The audience stood up, cheered us, and actually booed the team back into the tunnel."

And in a Michigan first, he had a stadium announcer introduce the band's various moves.

The high-stepping band made its national television debut at the 1948 Rose Bowl, where a reporter called Michigan "the Radio City Rockettes of football." Somebody else declared the game over before it began, based solely on the pre-game execution of the band.

In 1950, an eight-page spread in Life magazine (circulation: 8.5 million) sealed the band's national prestige. Alfred Eisenstaedt's iconic image of Ann Arbor children gleefully strutting behind drum major Dick Smith set the tone for an effusive photo essay about the pageantry of Michigan.

"This art form has reached a spectacular peak at the University of Michigan whose band, directed by ace Bandmaster William D. Revelli, is considered by many to be the most musicianly in the U.S."

He knew he was at the right university.

"Look at the stadium. Look at those crowds. Look at our team. Look at the program. Look at the number of people who want to play in the band. Look at everything else. Look at the facilities.

"You're not going to go anywhere and beat this."

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## CHAPTER 6

# THE SYMPHONY BAND

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It is the opening concert of an international tour that will span 30,000 miles, 110 performances and 21 cities. Tonight they play for Moscow, a city that in 1961 has rare contact with Americans, their universities or their young people.

The Michigan students have played—well—for nearly two hours, and are concluding with a Russian classic, Mussorgsky's majestic "Great Gate of Kiev." They have put on an exceptional performance, and Revelli braces for the applause he knows will explode after this grand finale.

Instead there is silence.

Frozen, he stares at his students. What have we done wrong? Who have we offended? It seems all oxygen has left the hall.

After a moment that spans forever, a single Russian rises. He claps, once, and the audience of 6,000 mimics him. Then they clap again, slowly, and again, faster and faster again, now they are stamping their feet, and clapping and stamping, thousands of hands and feet pounding away.

"Then they stood up and cheered and then I knew we had arrived."

The Symphony Band plays five encores.

\* \* \*

If you wanted to get under Bill Revelli's skin, you called him the director of the Michigan Marching Band.

"I want to scream. Not because I am not proud to be director of the marching band; of course I am. But wouldn't you believe that after a half a century they would know that I am director of all University bands?"

The Symphony Band was the finest of the bands he came to create and conduct. There was the Varsity Band, the Marching Band, Wolverine Band and more. The Symphony Band, though, was the cream, rich with music majors and aspiring professionals.

Not so at the start. Other than venues and uniforms, there was no distinction between Michigan's bands—the band was the band. And its reputation preceded it.

On a Sunday afternoon in the winter of 1936—Revelli's first in Ann Arbor—he and his charges were set to perform at the 4,300-seat Hill Auditorium.

"I came on the stage and looked in the crowd. It looked like a baroque trio; All those empty seats.

"I bawled. I'm not ashamed—I went home and cried."

They would practice, practice and practice some more. Start a piece. Stop. Start over. Stop. Start again. Stop. Over and over, until it was right. Revelli put in so much time with students that his faculty colleagues griped he was making them look bad.

Kids from Hobart applied to Michigan so they could again play with their mentor. More and more music majors joined, raising the quality and the sound.

The campus radio station began to broadcast concerts, and then a Detroit station, followed by a national radio syndicate.

He justly changed the name from concert band to symphony band. Where concert bands were traditionally identified as brassy and harsh, Revelli's band had a silky elegance to it. His clarinets could sound like violins, the euphoniums like cellos. He changed the seating of the ensemble, giving certain instruments the space he felt they needed to truly be heard.



Polish schoolchildren crowd around Revelli and his students during the Symphony Band's 1961 visit to Lodz.

Image: [William D. Revelli Papers 1907 - 1994, Bentley Library](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umichlib/141630919/focusrgn=C02:subview=standard) (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umichlib/141630919/focusrgn=C02:subview=standard>)



Revelli's final concert as director of bands was at Hill Auditorium in May 1971, when he retired after 36 years at the University of Michigan. Said the New York Times: "Since Mr. Revelli was an energetic man, it is unlikely that his retirement will be an idle one, but no matter what he does, his place in band history will be prominent and permanent."

Image: [William D. Revelli Papers 1907 - 1994, Bentley Library](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umichlib/141630919/focusrgn=C02:subview=standard) (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umichlib/141630919/focusrgn=C02:subview=standard>)

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"I can listen to recordings of other bands and then my own Michigan Band and I hear a different timbre. It's a different color."

— WILLIAM D. REVELLI

”



"I can listen to recordings of other bands and then my own Michigan Band and I hear a different timbre. It's a different color."

He worked particularly hard to convince composers to write for symphony bands and, given the quality of Michigan's, they did. The result: a depth of interesting, challenging symphony band literature that continues today.

He began taking the Symphony Band on the road—a first for a major university—and they performed in America's great venues. They amazed audiences in Boston Symphony Hall, the Philadelphia Academy of Music, New York's Lincoln Center, Philharmonic Hall in Los Angeles, and the ultimate destination, New York's Carnegie Hall.

It was hard to believe they were college musicians. *New York Times* music critic Harold Schonberg—considered the best of his era—raved about Revelli and Michigan students after a 1955 concert. "He got out of his kids what not many bandmasters ever achieve—a brilliant, yet luminous texture of tone, a smart-sounding ensemble, well-balanced choirs and even instrumental virtuosity."

The pinnacle was the 1961 tour, a goodwill gesture arranged by the U.S. State Department at the height of the Cold War. University bands and orchestras throughout the country were invited to submit tapes of their best work; the finest conservatories, Juilliard and Eastman, were in the running.

By now, though, Michigan's rock-solid reputation made them the overwhelming choice. The tour was going to take four weeks, then six, then eight and 11. Egypt was added to the itinerary; when diplomats in Jordan heard about the tour, they wanted the Michigan band, too. So did Lebanon and Cyprus.

In the end, the Michigan Symphony Band would tour for 15 weeks—an entire semester away from Ann Arbor—and visit nine countries; two months alone would be spent in the Soviet Union. It remains the most extensive tour ever carried out by a university band.

Wherever they performed, Michigan students were mobbed. Concerts sold out. Encores—six, seven, nine—became standard and extended performances by an hour.

The tour concluded at Carnegie Hall and the praise was lavish.

"The Michigan ensemble, composed of ninety-four students of the university, played with the precision of a well-oiled machine," wrote Raymond Ericson of the *Times*. "More than that, it produced some luscious, gleaming organ-like sonorities within performances that were always accurate, texturally clean, and smooth flowing."

This was Revelli perfection.

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## CHAPTER 7

# CODA

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**I**t's halftime and more than 106,000 fans are jammed into Michigan Stadium for 1992's homecoming and a drubbing of Minnesota.

The marching band is on the field and at attention, as are dozens of alumni players, in jeans and sweatshirts, who have returned for this fall ritual. They eye the 90-year-old conductor, retired for more than 20 years, and wait for his cue.

*"God Bless America" soars from their instruments. He commands the field, and then turns to face the stands and the press box. Again he conducts. Together, with the Michigan faithful, they sing in unison.*

*The applause begins well before the final note.*

\* \* \*

He was Mr. Revelli, Dr. Revelli or the Chief. He was charming and he was a tyrant. He worked incredible hours and he never grew tired.

Every rehearsal, every concert, every tour was an opportunity to be the best.

"Do you know how many times I've conducted 'The Victors'? Thousands! Do I ever conduct it like I'm bored with it? I don't care if I conduct it for a hundred years, every time I conduct it, I have never conducted it the time I'm going to conduct it. That makes it a premiere performance."

Revelli died in 1994. He founded the College Band Directors National Association and was inducted into both the Music Educators Hall of Fame and the Hall of Fame of Distinguished Band Conductors. The marching band facility at Michigan bears his name, as does the town bandshell in Hobart. A national contest for new band compositions is named in his honor. Numerous scholarships and awards honor his legacy.

What truly mattered to him, though, could not be captured in brick, stone or engraved plaques. It was the ability, and obligation, to inspire.

"The conductor has a responsibility to create an attitude of love for music. You are not a conductor of bands, you're a conductor of people. It's through music that you reach them, and it's a beautiful way to reach people."

*This article was drawn chiefly from George Alfred Cavanagh, "William D. Revelli: The Hobart Years" (dissertation, University of Michigan, 1971); Gregory L. Talford, "William D. Revelli: An Introspective Study" (master's thesis, Central Michigan University, 1985); Grace Shackman, "The Band Master," Ann Arbor Observer, December 1991; Stephen Rosoff, "At 92 He's Still True Blue," Michigan Alumnus, January/February 1994; Bo Schembechler and John U. Bacon, "Bo's lasting lesson #5: Respect your history," Michigan Today, September 2007; William D. Revelli Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan*



# 92 AND STILL TRUE BLUE

PHOTO BY BOB KALMBACH

*by Stephen Rosoff, M.A. '87*

*At 92 he's still true blue, if not totally in the pink. He gladly defies the doctor's 20-minute visitation order to share anecdotes about his 36-year history of conducting and teaching in Ann Arbor. Colleagues, friends, and former students supplement the tale.*

**W**illiam Revelli, director emeritus of bands, relaxes comfortably in his easy chair and waxes eloquently about his life. It's a long story—92 years long—so far. Two successive heart attacks last year attempted to abruptly edit it, but they have only succeeded in cancelling a busy schedule on the lecture circuit.

Revelli's music career began in Panama, Illinois (12 February 1902), a small mining town 90 miles south of Springfield. His father owned the grocery store there. Neither parent played an instrument but both loved music—Italian opera, mostly, bellowed forth from the Gramophone in the Revelli living room.

One morning, seven-year-old William awoke to find a violin case resting on his pillow. After a few visits to the local music teacher, who "played and taught every instrument equally badly," he was sent to a teacher 47 miles away in St. Louis, MO. Armed only with violin and brown bag lunch, he met the train at 5:15 a.m. every Sunday for the trip. The young Revelli, with flashlight in hand, would signal the conductor of The Limited. The train would stop and Revelli would get on. He wouldn't return until 9:15 that night.

Revelli was 12 when he first heard John Philip Sousa and his band at the State Fair in Springfield. It was to be the defining moment of his life. Interviewed many years later for the PBS special "If You Knew Sousa," Revelli said,

"It was the most beautiful sound I had ever heard . . . I couldn't sleep that night. I made my father take me again." From that time on, he knew he wanted to be a conductor.

He got his first chance in Chicago, where he studied with Leon Sametini and earned a B.A. in performance from the Chicago Musical College. In Chicago, he played with the Isham Jones Orchestra at the Sherman House Hotel as well as in the pit for the silent movies at the Chicago Theater. There the conductor noticed him

one day coaching and conducting others in his section. He let him take over for a Sunday matinee and soon the afternoon performances were his, only to be taken away by the advent of the "talkies". "Thousands of Chicago-area musicians were out of work overnight," he recalls.

Revelli went back to school for a master's degree in music education at Vandercook College of Music. A year later, he took a job at Hobart High School in northwest Indiana.

When he approached the superintendent in Hobart about forming a band his answer was: "Yes, I'll give you permission but there's no place to rehearse and there's no time to rehearse and there's certainly no budget."

"Well, I went out of there disappointed but then I thought, I went there to get permission and he gave me that." Two weeks later the band convened at 7 a.m. in the chemistry lab. As for finances, the women of Hobart formed "the first band mother's club in the United States." For ten years they financed the band and were rewarded with six national titles. Despite all of those chicken dinners, it was "a blessing in disguise," says Revelli. "I would never have gotten that much of a budget through the school."

Revelli arrived in Ann Arbor in 1935. Rehearsal facilities in Old Morris Hall were poor and instructors were scarce.

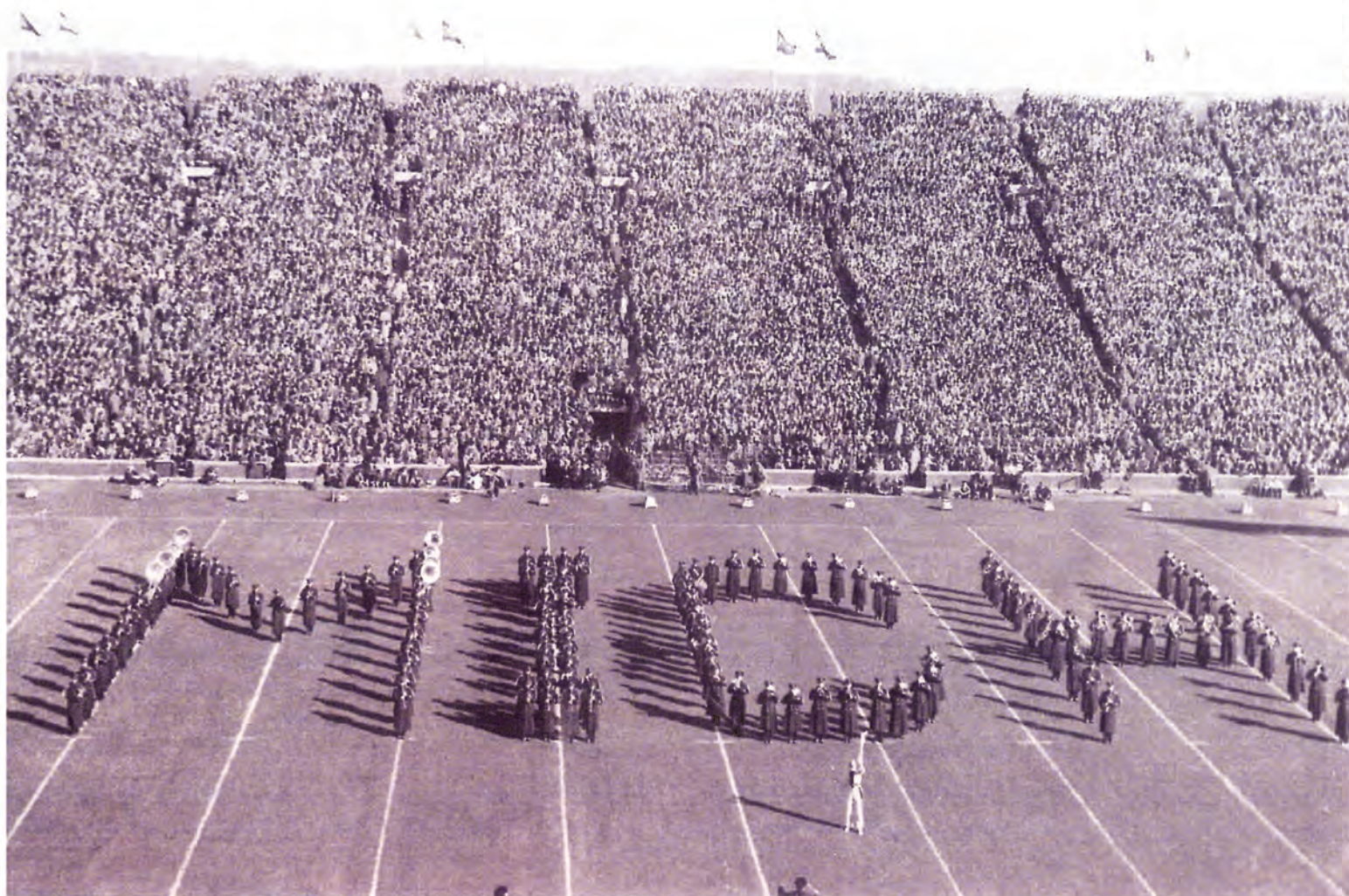
Despite Revelli's department chairman title, he was a faculty of one. "Every Tuesday night at 7:30 p.m. I would hold a meeting of the wind instrument staff," the minutes of which were logged and sent to the dean who later circulated them as a joke. "Professor Revelli, chairman of the wind instrument department, called a meeting. All were present. After considerable discussion, it was unanimously agreed that we had to do some things. . ."

Revelli and Dean Earl Moore made a formidable team and changed the music department from a "back-street conservatory" to a bonafide school within the University, according to Professor Hugh Cooper, who, with 47 years of service has taught at the University longer than any other faculty member. They also helped to create the prototype for the modern music school. With Dean Moore's blessing, Revelli added personalized instruction to the curriculum and part-time faculty (many of whom eventually became full-time) by recruiting members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Over time there were enough specialists to cover every wind instrument.

"It was much cheaper to come here because elsewhere you normally had to pay a studio fee to the teacher," explains Cooper. "He (Revelli) felt every person coming here was just as entitled to instruction in their specialty."

Within a decade, Revelli was attracting students from around the United States. He didn't rely solely on his or Michigan's growing reputation, however. As he travelled around the country, usually as a guest conductor, he sought out talented individuals and subtly recruited them.

*Revelli and Dean Earl Moore made a formidable team and changed the music department from a "back-street conservatory" to a bonafide school within the University, according to Professor Hugh Cooper, who, with 47 years of service has taught at the University longer than any other faculty member. They also helped to create the prototype for the modern music school.*



One of Revelli's role models was the tempestuous Arturo Toscanini. At the first rehearsal he attended—Toscanini was conducting the NBC Orchestra in Studio H—he remembers being shocked by the maestro's antics. "He couldn't hear the bassoon. He said to the bassoon, 'I do not hear, I do not hear, I do not hear you'—he spoke half in Italian—and they tried it again. This time, 'It's too bad I hear you, this time I hear, it's too bad; it's better you far away; I don't see good but I hear good; it's better you far away.'" Later, Revelli asked first trumpet Harry Glantz how members of the orchestra could swallow such abuse. Glantz replied that the maestro was "like a kid" and that he would later hug the man and apologize—no one paid any attention to him when he got into one of those moods.

Compared to Toscanini, Revelli says he was "a lamb." If so, he was a daunting "lamb" for legions of Michigan band members. Only 5'6-7/8" ("Don't cheat me out of my 7/8") tall, when Revelli took the podium, he assumed epic proportions.

Professor John Mohler, who studied and played under Revelli (1954 - 1956 bands), remembers rehearsals with some trepidation. "One of his techniques was to walk down the line," Mohler recalls. He would single out a sec-

tion, then require each chair to play their part. "Fortunately I was first chair, so I couldn't look too bad." But some of the players at the end of the row didn't fare so well and eventually were too scared or angry to continue.

Being part of a Revelli band was mentally tough and some couldn't take it. But for the vast majority who stuck it out, the rewards were great. "Those of us who stayed were convinced that we were doing the right thing," says Larry Livingston, '64*mus.*, '70*M.mus.*, who played clarinet in the Revelli bands of the early sixties. "It was worth it because of what he taught you." Livingston is now dean of the school of music at the University of Southern California and his convictions about the value of a Revelli education have grown stronger through the years. "Every time I go to the podium, I feel like I should write him a check."

More than 20 years have passed since Revelli conducted the band; some of his motivational tactics might not be tolerated today. "The learning environment in university music schools has changed as it has in the orchestral world," says Livingston, "but he was the right man for his time.

"Part of the real lore of Revelli," says Livingston, "is that he so desperately wanted to be the model of ethics, integrity, pedagogy; our



## A ROSTER OF REVELLI-ISMS

Last year members of the '61 symphony band gathered with their leader for a reunion. They also prepared a remarkable document of 511 Revelli-isms. Here's a small sampling:

- #74 Why don't you get a hammer and be done with it?
- #75 Here I picture a group of monks talking quietly in the churchyard.
- #80 *(to the percussion)* What are you building back there?
- #106 In my Hobart band, all of the trombone players moved their slides in the same direction at the same time.
- #109 I love every one of you.
- #154 Concussionist.
- #163 *(to oboe)* I always wanted a buzzsaw.
- #255 If you marched half as well as you played, you'd be twice as good.
- #263 *(to flutes)* I could make the same sound with a kitchen utensil.
- #264 *(to bass clarinets)* That's not a vibrato—it's a wobbalato; if I got much closer I'd catch pneumonia.
- #282 You couldn't blend with a streetcar.
- #314 The only reason you can't play it is because the last time you played it was before the Civil War.
- #325 Listen to that pitch—you've got every letter in the alphabet.
- #354 It goes from a college band to a high school band to a junior high band in four bars.

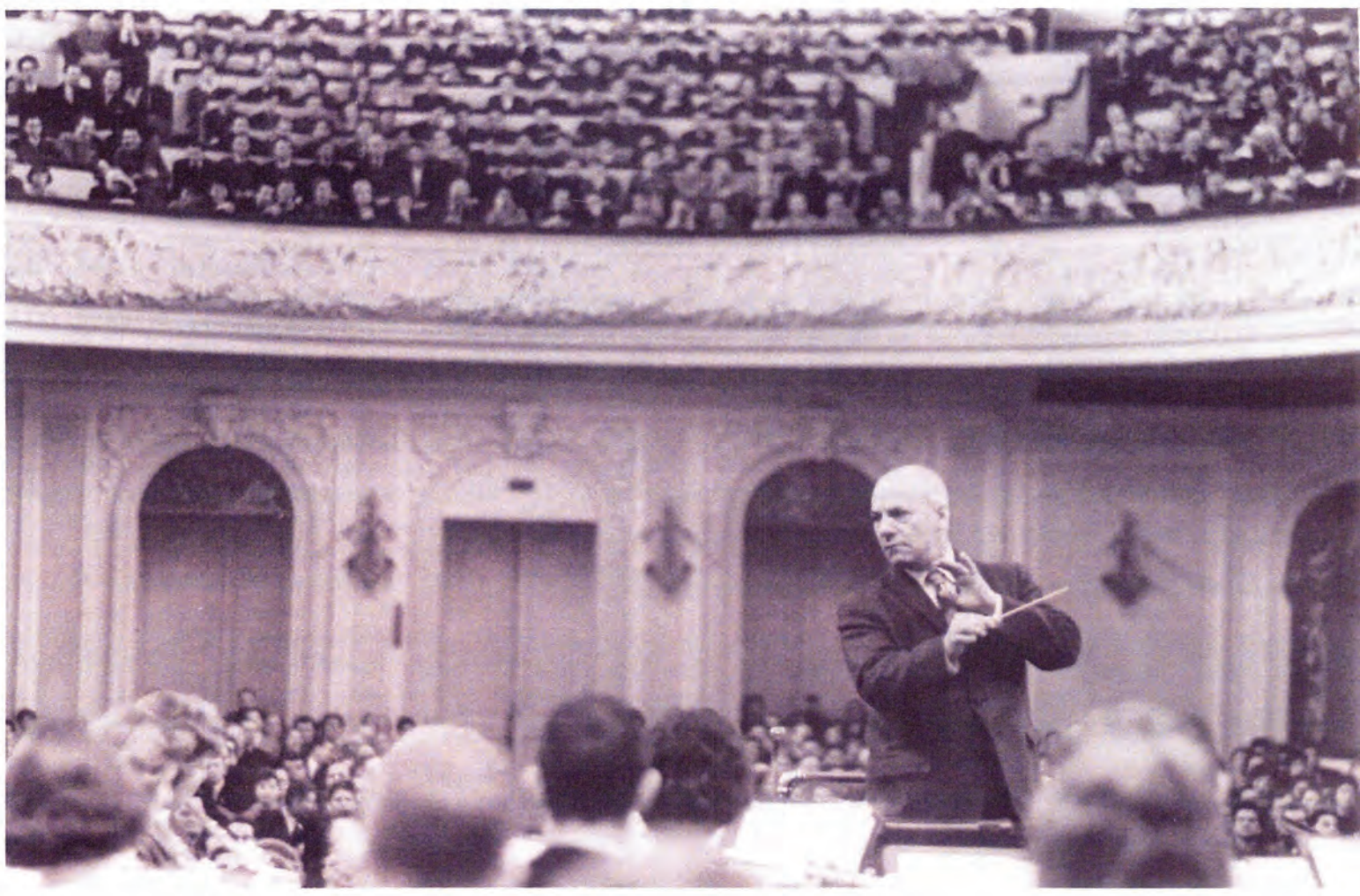
Revelli returns to Michigan Stadium to conduct the band at half time during homecoming 1993.

rabbi, our minister. He looked upon the players in the Michigan band as completely his responsibility. In his zeal to shape us, to lead us, he made himself transparently flawed. We loved him not for his perfection, which we knew didn't exist, but his imperfections.

"Without those flaws there would be no Revelli stories," says Livingston. "He'd be canonized." At the same time, he adds, "if it hadn't been for his genius, there wouldn't be any stories either."

Revelli acknowledges that he is demanding. "If tough means you want it right, then I'm tough," he told his interviewer for the PBS Sousa special. "I'm uncompromising. I'm total-





ly dedicated to perfection and when it's just about right, I'm unhappy. To me that's like a pilot who misses the runway by eight feet. You're dead; he's almost right."

When describing Revelli, colleagues invariably mention the same qualities: self-discipline, self-dedication, high standards, fine musicianship, personal magnetism and force. Consequently, he produced a better tone from his bands than other conductors and he didn't necessarily do it with better musicians. According to Cooper, "he had the ability to take mediocre talent and make them play way over their heads. . . a metamorphosis would take place. He challenged them as individuals."

Quite simply, for three decades, "he was the most important person to teach at the School of Music," says Livingston.

Revelli and his bands created many memorable musical moments, from Carnegie Hall to great halls in world capitals, to performances in Hill Auditorium and Michigan Stadium. And spirited applause was always the immediate result. Not so, however, at the conclusion of the 1961 symphony band's opening concert in Moscow, a concert that marked the beginning of a four and one-half month world tour that represented the U.S. State Department's musical contribution to a cultural exchange program with the Soviet Union.

The first half of the concert was an American program and the last half, Russian. "Of course I saved our big guns for the last number, which was *Pictures at an Exhibition*. When we finished, boy, I thought all heck will break loose. And here I got through with this tremendous thing and I was getting ready to turn around and accept the applause and there wasn't any. I looked at the band and I thought, 'My God, we've played something that's taboo.'"

No one had warned him about a Russian concert-going tradition. After an uncomfortable pause, at least for Revelli and the band, a member of the audience in the second or third row stood up, turned around and clapped once. The audience responded in kind. The exchange was repeated incrementally so that before too long, the pace had accelerated. Next, people were



PHOTO BY BOB KALMBACH

stamping on the hall's wooden floors. "It lasted for what seemed like 10 minutes. Then they stood up and cheered and then I knew we had arrived."

That tour served up many more exciting moments—like shaking hands with Khrushchev, and a quarantine in Cairo (the band landed there on the same day as the Bay of Pigs' landing). But Revelli's greatest thrill of his 36 years at Michigan came at the culmination of the tour with a performance at Carnegie Hall. After 110 concerts overseas, the band was a "finely oiled machine." That night, following the performance, the hall erupted. The next morning, after a three-hour recording session for Vanguard Records' *Touchdown U.S.A.* and *Hail Sousa*, the president of the company told Revelli, "We've

recorded all of the professional orchestras and I've never seen more efficiency nor heard better playing."

"I was never more proud," says Revelli.

His most exciting moment at Michigan Stadium was provided by a stray trombonist at half time. The normal routine (entrance through the tunnel, march to the fifty-yard line, left face to the south goal where the flag is raised, a bow, and back to the north goal), was disrupted on this particular occasion when the first trombone, who led the entire band, made a left turn instead of a right. The rest of the band did not follow him. "I'll never forget this boy. He went about 20 yards and he stopped because he realized that he was all alone. He just faced the crowd and made a show out of it. Everybody thought he was the soloist. (Revelli mimes the slide and punches out the *Victors*). What a ham! The band came back of course, and when they did he picked them up and went right with them.

"When he came off the field I asked him, 'What in the world were you thinking about?' He said, 'I don't know, my mind just went blank.' I slapped him on the back and said 'Some day you're going to be the dean of a music school.' "

Revelli's greatest thrill of his career, however, was with the Hobart High School Band when John Philip Sousa announced that they had won their first national title. "I didn't walk down the aisle for the trophy, I ran." After that, Revelli met Sousa on several occasions, including a visit at the composer's New York home.

Revelli has countless stories of Michigan. He's still laughing about the time his drum major tripped over the yardage marker and onto a muddy field ("The only time I've ever laughed at a mistake"). And there is the bizarre tale of two band members who lost their uniform pants on the way to the Ann Arbor train station and left for Boston without them. Nevertheless the pants showed up at Harvard Stadium just before the game on the following day.

*Our time with Revelli breezes by as he reminisces. One marvels at his memory and penchant for detail. If only we could mine more of those anecdotes . . . All the while, Mary, his wife of 70 years, sits by his side. She is ill and cannot contribute to this story. (Editor's Note: Mrs. Revelli died October 24.) As time draws to a close, we are reminded of one more question. It's the one Barbara Walters always asks: "Would you have done anything differently?"*

*"My 36 years at Michigan were not without mistakes but I can't think of anything I would want to change." Then, after brief reflection, he adds, "Knowing what I know now, I think I would have been a bit more mild."*

These three Michigan classics were produced under the baton of William D. Revelli.

PHOTOS BY BILL BAKER BARR





# Richard Wagner: Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral



Richard Wagner (1813-1883), *Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral*, from the opera *Lohengrin* (1850), (1848; premiere 1850, Weimar, produced and conducted by Franz Liszt). Act II, Scene 4, transcribed and arranged<sup>1</sup> for symphony band by Lucien Cailliet (born May 22, 1897), copyright 1938 by Remick Music Corporation, New York, NY. Full score (11 pages) and 4-line condensed score (6 pages), plate number 19983. E $\flat$  major, common time, *Langsam und feierlich* (slowly and solemnly), 85 bars, performance time ca. 6:00.

Scoring:<sup>2</sup> piccolo, 3 flutes; 2 oboes, English horn, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon; clarinets: E $\flat$ , B $\flat$  I, II, III, alto, bass, B $\flat$  contrabass; saxophones: 2 alto, tenor, baritone, bass; 3 cornets, 2 trumpets, 4 horns, 3 trombones, baritones, tubas, string contrabass; harp, kettledrums, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum.

## THE BAND WORLD BEFORE ELSA

The middle 1930s were vibrant, exciting times for young musicians in the United States. There was – among many hypnotics – the Sibelius craze, our discovery of *Le Sacre du printemps*, and those Kalmus Miniature Scores (“defective copy/half price”) to whet the appetite to know. I also remember a spirit of expectancy among some of us who sensed the coming of the band as a music medium that was progressing beyond its present level.

School band contests had really heated up, extending the range of performance with each succeeding year's greater technical brilliance; music, including the band, had become a part of daily life at school. We rarely heard the Washington service bands, save for those of the Marine Corps or Navy by way of radio or on an occasional tour. All of those one-time professional bands long before had stored their trunks; their era was history. Nobody was recording any music other than marches, and radio seldom broadcast any but the lightest band fare.

Where, then, was the activity that could feed our spirit of expectancy? It was, of course, in the colleges and universities. Here the leadership was as widespread and as geographically “isolated” as the institutions themselves. There were several, I am sure; but I shall limit my exemplary choices to but two of them, both on the Mississippi flyway,

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FREDERICK FENNELL is currently serving as the first permanent conductor of the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra. His long and distinguished career in the United States has included his founding of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and the recording of much of the band's music, including *Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral*.

divergent in resource. One survives and thrives while the other is gone.

The leader of them all was the Concert Band at the University of Illinois. It was founded at the turn of the century, nurtured, administered, transcribed-for, conducted, and loved by Albert Austin Harding (1880-1958). It was his institution – Harding and the players – who had led the way for us all. Harding's love for the orchestra's literature which he poured into the scores he transcribed for the Illinois Concert Band began a period of concentration within this borrowed creative element that is still very much a part of present-day band pedagogy and performance.

Off to the north, in Northfield, Minnesota, James R. Gillette (born May 30, 1886) was finding the time amidst his duties as chapel organist at Carleton College to develop his personal music interest, The Carleton College Symphony Band. As its conductor he had brought this trim little group of some 40 players to a high point of performance perfection, finding many of the players who would become students at this top-rated liberal arts school during his visits in summer to that eternal well spring called Interlochen. It was Gillette who gave us the name "Symphony Band," later adopted by me and by William D. Revelli and others as the name of the groups we would conduct. Gillette was also a composer and a transcriber, as well as an enterprising promoter of the Symphony Band idea. He began the publication of a series of symphonic transcriptions by convincing M. Witmark to publish his edition for American instrumentation of the French original of Paul Fauchet's pioneer three-movement *Symphony in B<sup>b</sup> for Band*, believed to be the first work published in this form. Gillette had opened the publisher's door to an expanded instrumentation and had given the band another name; yet the man and all traces of his work seem unfortunately to have vanished.

Harding and Gillette are a measurable benchmark in 20th century band development. Concert Band/Symphony Band transcribers now mixed their instrumental colors from a different palette than had served their predecessors, who had been limited, perhaps, by those professional expenses not found in schools.

The coming on of the band as a music medium beyond its former level had, indeed, begun.

From its initial successes with the Symphony Band Library, an agreement was drawn in the mid-1930s between Lucien Cailliet and the Music Publishers Holding Corporation, of which Remick Music Company was part. Cailliet had been a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and this distinguished musician and superb orchestrator enlarged the Symphony Band Library with two excerpts from Wagner's operas. The first was *Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine* from "Die Gotterdammerung", a popular and well-known portion of that opera. *Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral* from "Lohengrin" was not as familiar, but Cailliet's transcription of it would become the most-played and perhaps the most-admired of all orchestral transcriptions for band.

*Elsa's Procession* begins with eight of the most pleasant (and potentially treacherous) measures in the band's music; there just isn't any place to hide. Wagner's traditional harmony exposes all of the basic problems of intonation when that is a problem for any player; and this is also a pedagogical challenge to the conductor, one that may be met and solved through patient listening and intelligent repetition, careful adjustment, as well as with application of a variety of electronic devices, beginning with the most simple tape recorder. However, the conductor's greater challenge is prudent choice of pace and its execution through the greatest possible sostenuto.

*Langsam und feierlich* is highly expressive terminology in the German language, and it frequently strikes a quaking fear into players and conductors. The words of the English translation – slowly and solemnly – frequently lead to an interpretation of the music that denies the spirit of the occasion. Solemn though such an event certainly is, there must be some secret joy in her heart as well – after all, she is going to her wedding, not her execution! This is not a funeral scene, but a deadly slow tempo can quickly turn it into one.<sup>3</sup> After many years of study, listening, rehearsal, and performance,<sup>4</sup> I have settled at this writing on a pulse of  $\text{♩} = 56$ ; I have also heard convincing performance in the low 70s. Whatever the conductor's choice may be, it will probably be drawn from the overall view of the whole *Procession* and be in keeping with the dramatic elements of harmonic progression, nuance, and dynamic.

These first eight measures are solo playing as scored by Wagner, the alto saxophone being more than adequate as a substitute for English horn. As has been recommended in similarly difficult beginnings of other pieces I have discussed in print, it is best to rehearse these first eight bars apart from the full band.

One of the conductor's vital psychological assets in a human relationship as complex as a large instrumental ensemble is the feeling of security that constantly must be nurtured between the podium and the players. One way to achieve this is to begin the first rehearsals of a piece like *Elsa's Procession* at any point in its unfolding *except* at the beginning. The four soloists tend to be up-tight to begin with, for theirs is a trepidacious exposure to every kind of complication, physical and mechanical: reeds, embouchure, intonation, water, air, rhythm, shaky fingers, leaky pads, butterflies – haw-eyed conductors – and all that silence from the players behind them. It can be an emotional experience that is difficult to handle.<sup>5</sup>

And so I begin *Elsa*, not at bar one but at bars 55 through 62 where the atmosphere of musical performance is much more secure, involving almost all of the band. The harmony and rhythm are identical. This preparation makes beginning at the beginning just a bit more assured for all concerned there and invites the band into the music's beauty and its challenge from the very start of rehearsal.

Critical balance of the four lines of sound in the first two bars frequently demands more sound than *piano*

for the flute's melodic line, which must predominate *before* its crescendo. Ensemble playing and style command everyone's attention as Elsa begins her way in positively measured tread. *Every* note of each line must be sustained its full measure and seemingly beyond, with the sound that does the sustaining being the result of air expenditure that is as solidly supported as possible.

Wagner's solid block harmony laced with typical passing tones, suspensions, and appoggiaturas seems a simple enough excursion into the diatonic style; but I've never found its realization to be a simple achievement the first time through with any group. Everybody *always* is in a hurry to get to the coming note, whereas occupation with the note in hand should be the concern of all, with total support from the breathing apparatus being the foundation of the music making. The previous sentence could serve as a *credo* for every note of every bar in this transcription, and for every instrument, including harp and percussion; placement of their notes is dictated by the ultimate declaration of note values as they are offered by the rest of the band in the practice of this creed.

The conductor's part in all of this may be seen in the linear character of page one of the full score<sup>6</sup> where Wagner's elevated harmony is closely bunched in his desire to invest the music with a lofty character. The practice is most stunningly achieved in the "Lohengrin" Prelude, where the violins playing in their highest register with *ppp* natural tones and harmonics, alternated with the high reeds create a shimmering, mystical, ethereal, and celestial aural impression of the Holy Grail. These are sounds that transport the listener out of this world and into the one that Richard Wagner knew his music could suggest. Elsa of Brabant may be very much in this world as she proceeds to her wedding with Lohengrin; but our simple and effective performance of these first eight bars must endeavor to produce a music that is not.

These few visual aids placed in the score and parts assist in the achievement of ensemble and style; conductor motion is suggested below the music.

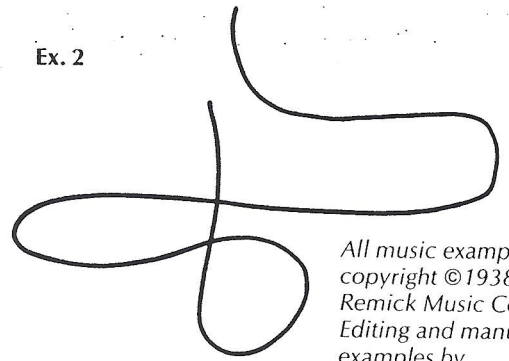
Ex. 1 [1-8]

Langsam und feierlich  
slowly and solemnly

The musical score for Ex. 1 [1-8] is titled "Langsam und feierlich" (slowly and solemnly). It features multiple staves for various instruments: Flute, 1st Clar., 2nd Clar., 3rd Clar., Eng. Hn., Alt. Sax if no Eng. Hn., 1st Hn., 2nd Hn., B'ssn., and Sax. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *pp*. Below the staves, a hand-drawn line indicates the "Intensity level in legato", showing a gradual increase in intensity over the first eight bars.

Viable options for the conductor's physical motion caution against expansive coverage of space up and down; avoid these:

Ex. 2



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Editing and manuscript  
examples by  
Frederick Fennell.

Parts for those players entering for the first time at [9]① should show that their entrance is preceded by a critically-placed eighth note anacrusis. Place that reminder in the parts as you see it at the end of example 1. It may take a few minutes of a conductor's time to do this, but compared to the many minutes wasted in rehearsal or the sloppiness and insecurity that one hears in performances, the time is a long term investment against these inevitably-recurring frustrations. This final eighth note [8] offers the conductor another opportunity to contribute to stylistic performance and to aid the players by having the courage to continue motion upward on this fourth pulse beyond any height used in the previous seven bars. When skilfully done, this motion assists all to execute the important entrance with security, and ultimately legato.

As the texture thickens at ① it is wise to establish the ensemble's dynamic level at *piano* and to spin out the gathering dynamic intensities gauged against the top of the crescendo [13-15]. Cailliet has left that level to us conductors, no more than mezzo-forte. Measures 9-12 carry nuances that are expressive for the descending lines with no suggestion of the same for those that rise, and since both are part of a gathering intensity, even before the printed crescendo at [13],

these two lines might be adjusted to look and sound like this:

Ex. 3 [9-12]

The first entrance of the tubas [13] should identify them as the most important part of the crescendo, especially the rise from B<sup>b</sup> to B<sup>n</sup>. As bar 14 ends (c minor) with its final eighth an anticipation of the down pulse of [15] it is wise to add a tenuto line to that anacrusis. The conductor is expected to lead the group through the minute but stylistically proper slight delay of the note that follows.

The "Wagner turn" in the cadence [15-16] played by flutes, E<sup>b</sup> and B<sup>b</sup> clarinet I is an expressive junction of his initial musical ideas. When used five other times in this piece it is a mid-phrase expression. The conductor can study this ornament with the group by writing the notes of bar 15 and the first one of [16], [28 and 29] on the board in these two ways:

Ex. 4 [15-16] [28-29]

Asking that all convert the music to concert pitch, every player in the group should learn the feeling of this simple ornamentation in the two ways that it is used by Wagner. Ask the band to sing first, in their own vocal register; after customary timidity and a few giggles of embarrassment they will finally express themselves without the instrument to the embouchure. Another different experience could lead to rewarding performance. Those whose music does not contain these figures should know what they feel and sound like, the better to accommodate those who do play them in bars 28, 48, 52, 57, and 61.

I have even found it to be comforting to the players and myself to write a pitchless rhythmic visual aid above the note of the players who do not have the turn, but whose following note must be placed as accurately as possible for synchronized ensemble; horns II & III are aided in this way:

Ex. 5 [15]

Future performances would also benefit from the caution "slowly" written above the turn whenever it appears.

Next comes an adjustment in balance, at which we conductors are sometimes inept, and unable to communicate with the principal players; this is the matter of difference between a *solo* dynamic and a *tutti* sound. The example before us [16-25] is typical. I recall no time of any first rehearsal with any group when I did not have to either stop and ask for a *solo* sound or beg for it with physical gesture – both highly unnecessary. And we who are the large ensemble teachers from the first day that most players sit in a group are to blame for many of these bad habits in ensemble playing that continue unchecked. *Solo* means: "Play out!... it's *your* tune."

Solo oboe and solo clarinet parts [16-25], or course, are undermarked in the first place. Having to do battle with 13 other instruments, most of them set at the same piano, an adjustment might be made of their dynamic *down* one level and that of the soloists up about one. For those readers "allergic" to footnotes and corrections it is imperative that the printed A<sup>n</sup> in the bass clarinet at ② [17] be changed to written C<sup>n</sup> below the staff to become the root of the B<sup>b</sup> major concert triad that the solo oboe outlines; remove the diminuendo in [18] and consider the following editings for oboe and clarinet:

Ex. 6 [16-25]

Only with maximum control and support can a clarinetist play the solo [20-25] in one breath and this is only possible when the conductor does not mistake the wedding for a funeral. Skill in playing what is written is sufficient.

Clarinet I plays from a part as confusing at [25] as what we see in the score; what the listener hears needs this visual sorting:

Ex. 7 [25-26]

All not playing the turn at [28] should know that one is there with the pitchless reminder, and the horns,

too, must be prompted not to hurry into the third pulse of [30-31] with their significant harmonic change; try these editings:

Ex. 8 [30-31]

The conductor can help the horns by continuing his motion *upward* for the second pulse [30-31], thus delaying motion to the third quarter note until the proper moment. With his subtle and effective modulation from E<sup>b</sup> to E major, Wagner's passion for his musical ideas seems to rise and players never fail to respond. Conductor control of all that happens in this attractive music is essential to its steady procession to the great climax. Keeping the lid on is never easy when the music incites the players to seize its control. But from ④ onward, all – beginning with the conductor, must be patient in an intense musical atmosphere charged with lyricism that comes from the greatest possible legato. The sudden richness in the transformation from E<sup>b</sup> to E major is part of the feeling that comes over the band; almost all are now contributing to the lush tonal fabric; horns lead the way.

Wagner's suspension and elision [37] demands total ensemble for its full effect. Cornets and trombone tend to be careless with placement of their E major triad falling in early with the rising rhythm of the ascending triad in the reeds; again, the pitchless visual aid can avoid this problem:

Ex. 9 [37-38]

Customary distance between the reeds and brass may be part of the problem which, at its source, is a matter of listening.

The harp played at a level much beyond the printed *piano* contributes important rhythmic/tonal punctuations at its initial entrance, providing definition to all of that sostenuto playing that should be coming from the winds. If harp is not available, it is desirable to adapt its part for piano 4 hands; 20 fingers can enrich these chords with every appropriate doubling of the notes as distributed for but the six fingers and two thumbs of the harpist. The arpeggios at ⑥ can be played in octaves and the closing section of the piece may be adjusted in the same way.

Passages of harmonic support from the opera's choirs filling the stage for this brilliant 4th scene of

Act II are scored here for alternate brass choirs – cornets with trombones, horns with baritones. The parts might carry this information: "soli w/trombones for cornets and vice versa, same for "horns w/baritones."

That dominating descending melodic figure which appears four times in sequences between [39 & 45] is the leading musical material of those measures:

Ex. 10 [41-42]

Cailliet has thickened its supporting material so densely that flutes and clarinets find it difficult to maintain this leading musical material without reverting to a strident sound which is the invariable result of forcing the tone in that register of the clarinet. The conductor's responsibility is – of course – everything; and here it is the *kind* of sound as well as the quantity produced by the rest of the band. That lid *has* to stay on for another 25 bars. A conductor's visual control of the group is very much a two-way street. Not much will be controlled when there is no eye contact, and with *all* that needs regulation in this music, the players must divide their eyes equally between their page and the conductor's face.

As Wagner is craftily edging his way back into E<sup>b</sup> from E major, the conductor would do especially well to keep the eyes on everybody and to complete this beautiful, subtle transitional measure [46] in the positively *up* position. The composer has led us all into such a state of anticipation and suspension that in this single final A<sup>#</sup> eighth-note he makes his musico-dramatic time stand still. It is *magic!* And at ⑥ it must be *magic in piano* for all except the brasses once more in their role as the on-stage choirs. The eighth-note they "sing" must be very sticky and separated from the following half-note. The German words sung here "... Sie naht..., die Engel..." (she comes, the angel); establish that space between the notes. Our music might be made to look like this:

Ex. 11 [47-48]

Sie-naht she comes Sie-naht she comes

When one medium borrows from another, it is incumbent upon those who lease to know and to observe the lender's performance traditions and sonorities *and* the techniques by which they are

produced. Wagner's brass writing, so compatible with any surrounding instrumental fabric, appropriately is adopted by the transcriber to fill the role of the stage choirs. Vocal production and particularly the enunciation of the words has everything to do with the character of and placement of the eighth-note and half-note in Ex. 11. German diction for "Sie naht" (lots of zee), multiplied by forty singers makes performance just a little different from what it seems to be on the surface of the page. Diction provides its special emphasis while vocal production and stage acoustics contribute the space that separates the two notes in purely instrumental performance. It is appropriate to extend the string contrabass, arco, beyond the printed pizzicati ⑥ to ⑦.

At rehearsal number ⑦, 55 bars have passed since Elsa began her procession, during which the score has picked up another 27 followers to join with the original quartet. Once again, the conductor must have a clear grasp of the balances within the score and a pre-set order of their priority, among which the following may be listed, and I mean *written-down* on a separate paper hinged at the center binding of the score as permanent reference:

1. Melody, its tonal blend and octaves balance (lower one usually too weak).
2. Bass line (static but the foundation of all above it, its presence must be felt/heard).
3. Harmony above it (equality in voicing of those lines rhythmically identical to the melody).
4. The walking figure in clarinets I (dynamic must be stated; Cailliet has none, score or part, make it *forte* if it is to be heard).
5. Importance beyond a first look of Cornet II's critical connecting line [58]; dynamic should be a strong mezzo-forte with crescendo, designation as "solo" with the caution: "do not hurry."
6. Cornet III's D<sup>b</sup> concert, 4th pulse, is the only sustaining 7th of that E<sup>b</sup>7 chord [59]; that bar should begin mezzo-forte and crescendo to *forte* on the D<sup>b</sup> concert.
7. Blend between saxes and horns.
8. All other lines are heavily duplicated harmony that must be subservient to the melody.
9. Bass lines, reed and brass [60 into 61] must be in crescendo to take the music (and the listener) to Wagner's deceptive C minor chord at [61].

And now the lid is about to come off, ⑦, and the opening pry is the B<sup>b</sup> anacrusis to ⑧ – marked *espressivo*. This is one of those tones that has to be sustained and as legato in its move toward the following note as it is humanly possible to make it and still not emasculate the rhythm. Have the players push that special amount of air into the B<sup>b</sup> just before the move to the E<sup>b</sup>. The growing intensity now becomes very difficult to restrain, but the observant conductor readily sees that Wagner has composed music with a gathering character that creates its own crescendo. This, however, will not be

seen in the pitifully ineffective condensed score (see measures 63-69), whereas, the full score reveals it all. A more glaring contrast is difficult to imagine, nor could one find a stronger case for the publication of no band score but a full one.

The profile of Wagner's simple but highly efficacious creation may be reduced to these few lines and basic chord symbols:

Ex. 12 [62-67]



The lower line ignites the upper one and vice versa until the lower line engages every bass-line instrument [68-74] in its most powerful register thrusting their music up through the rich harmony, countering and alternating with upper voices until the whole of the band unloads its inevitable, long-restrained sound at ⑨. The emotional effect can be totally overwhelming to the players...and, one hopes, to the conductor as well.

Horns, trombones, baritones and tubas who have been playing at top intensity throughout bars 68 through 72 continue so to the absolute end [72]. Then the conductor and the rest of the band must let them catch a fast breath to fill the great E<sup>b</sup> diminished seventh chord with a maximum of sforzando-capped sound; score and parts might carry these cautions and guides:

Ex. 13 [72-73]



In the presence of some of the most electrifying music in the band's basic repertory, the conductor must know that control is still leadership's greatest asset. As this wall of sound is coming at you, it is not the time to be anything less than master of all. Uppermost in mind should be the need to keep everything moving forward while still ennobling stylistically the now-familiar musical ideas passed mostly to the brass. Trombone parts [79] should carry the admonition: "Keep moving." To let the music wallow in a decaying pulse is to rob it of its majesty. According to individual choice, the conductor may wish to avoid any subdivision; but from the player's view of sound production a judicious amount of it is desirable. Excitement runs

right amidst the technical command required to produce this kind of music. Everything that a conductor may contribute to its secure performance is important, as is the elimination of anything that gets in its way. Knowing the difference between the two, with proper action upon that knowledge, can be the just measure of a conductor.

Keeping the music moving while approaching the natural *allargando* [82] that sets up the final cadence [83-85] allows the greater effect of that final stretch of the material we heard for the first time as the clarinet solo was concluded in measures 24 & 25. Then I feel that I must go back to tempo for the last three bars.

*Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral* was progressing as planned until measure 75, when action in the opera is interrupted – and rudely so – by Ortrud, who accuses Elsa of having her brother Gottfried killed so she could be crowned Elsa of Brabant, altogether a messy scene for a bridal occasion. This too, is where Lucien Cailliet had to interrupt Richard Wagner to bring this procession to Cailliet's conclusion. The first 78 bars are Wagner's in full score sequence and the last seven are Cailliet's adaptation with transcriber's license to achieve a stylistic conclusion – one you will not hear in the opera. With Ortrud's interruption, 646 bars pass before the matter is settled by King Henry I and the music of *Elsa's Procession* is heard again, this time in C Major; amidst a great flurry of the king's trumpets, Elsa and Lohengrin enter the cathedral.

Lohengrin marked Wagner's transition from the earlier style of set pieces found in *Tannhäuser* and *The Flying Dutchman* to *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, and *Parsifal* where "continuous melody" replaced traditional arias and choruses.

In conducting all of the massive sound of the two final pages of the band score, the physical motion, intensely legato, contributes appropriate energy to the performance – and it takes *controlled* energy to achieve this. Here is yet another time when conductors can draw upon past experiences in vocal or instrumental tone production to project a musical aesthetic through the only means at their disposal – the total body. Now is the time to remember what it feels like to reach for a fortissimo high B $\flat$  on the horn or cornet, to bow the cello, to blow the tuba, or to crash a pair of cymbals. Be the conductor a singer or not, I urge that all of these final bars [63 to 85] be sung in study of the score, sung (however badly) with proper production and support – and as phrased in the score – all to the tyrannical tick or blip of the metronome. "If you can't sing it, you can't conduct it" any more than one can play it fully and not sing it – minus the instrument. Many a deadly slow tempo could be adjusted, convincingly, by this method; and many a player will reward this kind of conductor with memorable performances of music in this style.

Wagner's music with Cailliet's ending is so convincing that listeners do not need to know anything about music, about opera or this opera's plot, the names of its other characters, or even who Richard Wagner was, to feel when the band comes

to the end of *Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral*, that somebody has arrived someplace.<sup>8</sup>

The following option is offered for the final three bars in clarification of this brilliant conclusion:

Ex. 14 [83-85]

The musical score for Ex. 14 [83-85] is a multi-staff arrangement. It includes staves for High Reeds, Brass, Reeds, Low Reeds & Brass, S.D. Cymbals & Bass Drum, and Kettle Drum. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'ff' and 'f'. Performance instructions like 'NO Trills' and 'NO ROLLS' are placed above and below the staves. The key signature is C Major and the time signature is 2/4.

With music such as this six minute clip out of a four-and-a-half hour opera, sounding as it does in Lucien's famous setting, it is difficult not to muse about what glorious creations Richard Wagner might have written for the band had all the forces to attract him to it at the middle of the 19th century been what they are today. ☹

#### NOTES

1. *Transcription*: The adaptation of a composition for something other than that for which it was written; *Arrangement*: to change what was originally written.
2. This was a pioneer publication with its expansion of band texture (English horn, contrabassoon, string contrabass and harp). Cailliet knew of the contrabass clarinet from his years as bass clarinetist with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Stokowski. The extensive cross-cueing and Lucien's footnote remind us that there *was* a time (1938) when flute players and instruments were scarce.
3. Foreword to the full score should be read and serve as an invitation to the conductor to consult the full opera score present in any music library and to know as much about the opera and its composer at this point in his turbulent life as time will allow. The suggestion that the pace of the music might ever be in the neighborhood of  $\text{♩} = 80$  is subject to considerable modification.
4. Many institutionally produced recordings exist, my first recording with The Eastman Wind Ensemble (Mercury Golden Import) is currently available as is the recent digital recording with The Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra (KOR 8411, available from Southern Music).
5. At high-stress moments like these, that special intake of oxygen can make the difference a player needs.

6. If all of that cross-cueing and other information bothers you as much as it does me, white it out.
7. It can be something like unrolling the tin seal on a really good can of coffee when the broken vacuum emits that marvelous aroma.
8. When Lucien was still active as a conductor, we both awaited our turn on the podium at a national meeting. We sat together backstage while *Elsa's Procession* was being performed by another conductor with the host band. I took the opportunity of this ironic situation to ask him if he had any thought at the time of the transcription that it would become the band's most-played adaptation. His reply in that charming juicy French accent was "No", to which he added casually that "...it was a contract job."

### CORRECTIONS

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| [2-3] part           | flute I – slur missing   |
| [12-13] score & part | bassoon II – slur missing  |
| [17] score & part    | bass clarinet – correct written A to C below   |
| [22] score & part    | clarinet I – correct 6th eighth-note from B <sup>b</sup> to B <sup>♯</sup>   |
| [31] score & part    | flute I, II, III – slur missing, double-dotted quarter to eighth.  |
| [39] score & part    | horn I in F – correct whole note E <sup>♯</sup> concert to half note E <sup>♯</sup> and half note B <sup>♯</sup> . |
| [44-45] score & part | baritone – slur missing  |

[51] part – No

[55] part

[55] part

[55] part

[56] part

[57] score & part

[57] score & part

[59] score & part

[61] part

[66] score & part

[71] part

[73] part

[76] part

piccino, flute I, II, III, E<sup>b</sup> clarinet, and clarinet I – correct dotted-eighth and sixteenth to two-eighths

E<sup>b</sup> clarinet – slur missing

clarinet I – relocate ⑦ from [54]

alto sax II – correct sixteenth-note from B to A

alto sax II – correct half-note from B to A

alto sax I – correct half-note from C to B<sup>♯</sup>

alto sax II – correct half-note from A to G

alto saxes I & II – correct score slur to the sixteenth; add slur to Alto II

piccino – add diminuendo, half to quarter note

baritones treble and bass – correct note to B<sup>b</sup> concert

string contrabass – slur missing last two notes

alto sax I – dot missing on half note

clarinet I – slur missing last three notes into [77]

[1-85] The condensed score has innumerable errors, phrase omissions and the customary ambiguities, too many to list here; if this score must be used, do not do so until corrected articulations, etc. have been transferred from a corrected full score, wrong notes especially.

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# Chords of Just Intonation

All chords are based on the root "C" which is "0" pitch

The image displays 20 musical staves, each representing a different chord in just intonation. Each staff consists of a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a chord diagram with fingerings. The chords are arranged in five rows of four. The labels for the chords are:

- Row 1: Maj, m, dim, 7th
- Row 2: Maj7, m6, dim(b6), 7th
- Row 3: Maj7, m7, 7(#5), dim7
- Row 4: m7(b5), 7(b5), mMaj7, Maj7(#5)
- Row 5: dimMaj7, 9th, 7(b9), Maj9

**Beyond Measure 7: Lessons that Linger**  
**Clinic Outline**  
**Larry J. Livingston**

- 1) Music Matters by David Elliott, Oxford Univ. Press
- 2) Free Play by Stephen Nachmanovitch, Penguin
- 3) This Is Your Brain On Music by Daniel Levitin, Penguin
  
- 4) Conceptual Teaching (Efficiency and Power) (See Handout)
  - When you stop, have a reason. Make constructive but conceptual, rather than merely circumstantial commentary Not just, “Clarinets you are too loud in measure 7,” but explaining why the clarinets are too loud, what concept or larger problem is causing them to be wrong. Do they not have the theme? Are they playing in the high register? Do they have a less interesting part? Are they making too bright of a timbre? Not just, “Trombones, you are late,” but more to the point what is the reason for being late. Are they entering after a long rest? Do they have an upbeat? Is their part written in an unfriendly register? Are they not listening? Not, “Band let’s do it again and do it better?” What needs to be better and what behavioral changes are needed to make it better? How about, “Clarinets, you have long note values in measure 7. That means you are not likely to be important. Write this in blood. Whenever your part is inactive, long notes for example, regardless of the dynamic in your music, you must listen for other more important musical information. To do that you have to get out of the way. Long notes mean play softer!” Conceptual teaching always focuses on the big picture. It always seeks broad application and the ultimate goal is to turn over the decision making process to the student(s). The conceptual approach is about building independence, about providing the student a lexicon of fixes for as many musical situations as possible.
  - There are only 2 basic forms of specific commentary. We need both The first is to focus on the technical/physical process which creates the sound. “Blow faster air, try this alternate fingering, open your throat, increase you vibrato speed, use a different mallet, etc.” This commentary presumes that if the player follows the technical instruction, the desired sound will result. Conversely, the other commentary describes the desired sound result and leaves it to the player(s) to make the appropriate technical/physical changes to produce that result. In this mode, the use of image, metaphor, and simile are very important. “Make a darker sound, it needs to be more delightful, sweeter, innocent, carefree, tragic, tender, rougher, etc.”
  - Stuctural/Harmonic Analysis and Historical Research
  
- 5) The eye – memorizing scores. If the performers are asked to look at us, we need to look at them.
  - Methods: structural analysis, playing at the piano, rote, note by note, listening to recordings (has risks)
  - Use in rehearsal, not just in concert. To be free, to really listen to the ensemble, to send a message to the players about preparation and commitment. Remember, it is actually much easier to conduct than to play

- 6) The ear – essence. It is all about listening. Breaking out of the cocoon.
  - Teach your ensemble to sing, speak, clap, CONDUCT
  - Mouthpieces only (especially for brass)
  - Try random seating (experiment)
  - Look for ways to vary the auditory experience
  
- 7) The body – get off the podium. Animate the rehearsal environment. Band is a class. Do whatever it takes to obviate the debilitating sameness of each day being like the last.
  
- 8) Videotape/DVD your rehearsals. Find areas for growth. Avoidance of repetitive comments and “old saws”. How do you look? How would you respond to that image on the screen if you were a member of the ensemble? Pain = Gain. It will be excruciating at first. Ultimately, it will make a huge difference.
  
- 9) Attitude is everything. Glass half full!
  - Aiming at the A+ in each student
  - The difference between being commanding and demanding
  - Avoiding the me vs they syndrome.
  - Looking for the ascent of spirit and the light in the eyes, as opposed to the “fish eye” or “dead eye”
  - Reminding them by your very manner of the magic that drew them to music in the first place
  
- 10) Helping them find meaning beyond the music.
  - Always looking for new possibilities
  - Being a contribution vs the success/failure paradigm
  - Fred Rogers was right
  - Releasing them to be
  - Seeking Samadhi, autotelesis

# **Beyond Measure 7: Lessons that Linger**

## **Conceptual Teaching and Rehearsing**

Larry J. Livingston

### **1. Tuning**

- The tuning of equal temperament intervals must be adjusted. Essentially, these adjustments or accommodations are related to the ear's preference for intonation derived from the natural or just intonation system. Therefore, there are many versions of every pitch. To be "in tune" depends on context (see "Chords of Just Intonation").

Some typical adjustments:

Octave and 5ths are tuned as though beatless.

In major chords, the 3<sup>rd</sup> must be kept low.

In minor chords, the 3<sup>rd</sup> must be kept high.

- All instruments are out of tune. Only players can be in tune.
- Tune from the bottom up. This is important because the lowest sounding voice provides the listener the largest set of audible overtones as a reference for locating the higher pitches in the sonority.

### **2. Balance**

- Build the sound from the lowest pitch in the sonority.
- Think of a pyramid.
- High frequency pitches are perceived by the ear to be louder than low frequency pitches. Therefore, dynamic adjustments or alterations to the printed markings may have to be made by the players in order to properly balance all of the voices in a given texture. For example, those players with the most soprano line may have to play softer than the dynamic indicated in the parts in order not to stand out. Similarly, to be heard, the players who have the lower voices may have to increase the written dynamic. In a descending melodic passage, it may be necessary to use an acoustical or compensatory crescendo to preserve the audibility of the line.

### **3. Interpretation/Rhythm**

- If you have a long note, get out of the way. The oft-repeated comment, "Never sit on a long note" is neither trustworthy nor even commonly applicable as an interpretive guide. In general, long note values should be played at a restrained dynamic level in order that more important musical information be audible.

- If your part is important, make it heard. There are a variety of musical circumstances which may require the player to project his or her part into the foreground. These include when the player has:
  - a) a melodic line or theme
  - b) a rhythmically active or moving line
  - c) a chromatic line
  - d) new material
  - e) a dissonant moment
  - f) a solo passage
  - g) a syncopated moment
  
- To show phrase direction, make clear the function of every note in the system. Every note in a musical line has a function: on the way to a goal, as a goal itself, or exiting a goal.
  
- In slow-tempo music, use the active passages to provide expressive shaping. All rhythms have an intellectual component (duration) and a feeling component. The intellectual component is simply about counting. The feeling component is richer in implication and has to do with shape, direction, and intent. In music which moves at a slow tempo, it is usually the moving line(s) or active passages which provide the opportunity for revealing musical direction. In this environment, trying to arbitrarily “gush” on long notes wrongly directs the listener’s attention to background musical material and, in the bargain, can mask or obscure important musical ideas which need to be heard.
  
- In fast-tempo music, use the long notes as anchors. Here, active rhythms are organized around longer note values, sometimes referred to as Agogic accents (stress based on the notes of longest duration). Intelligible phrasing and interpretation now depend on a dynamic profile whereby the “big” notes provide landing pads for the more florid rhythms which surround them. Even in this situation, however, it is rarely necessary to do more than “lean” on the long note, as opposed to artificially inflating it so as to seem more musical. Finally, when a fast-note passage *follows* a long note, it is often helpful to slightly shorten the long note, thereby creating a space before launching the passage.
  
- Beware the metric accent trap. Arsis and Thesis (literally “lifting” and “lowering,” terms derived from Greek poetry) is a concept of phrasing designed to counter what is sometimes referred to as the “tyranny of the bar line,” or the tendency to organize musical interpretation based on the patterns of stress suggested by the meter. In a piece written in common time (4/4), the normal accents would fall on beats 1 and 3. In that context, beats 2 and 4 are seen as afterthoughts, or weak beats. Following that line of reasoning, there is a danger of applying excessive weight to the strong beats, while the weak beats are neglected. This overt adherence to metric stress can result in a kind of ponderous and labored interpretation which lacks flow and continuity.

In the arsis/thesis concept, the normal focus of attention is reversed, so that weak beats are seen not as endings, but as beginnings which then lead to subsequent strong beats. Thus, beat 1 is felt as an ending, beat 2 leads to beat 3, and beat 4 is directed at the following downbeat. On a more micro level, the same concept can help reshape thinking in a rhythmic situation involving many notes per beat. In a passage comprised of 16<sup>th</sup> notes, instead of thinking, “1 ee and uh, 2 ee and uh, 3 ee and uh, 4 ee and uh”, etc., in which each “ee and uh” is treated as falling away from the beat, imagine feeling it as “1, ee and uh 2, ee and uh 3, ee and uh 4, ee and uh 1, ” etc., where each mini-phrase starts with “ee” and lifts to the next beat.

Of course, arsis/thesis can be applied in any meter and in music of virtually any tempo. Executed with care and control, it can liberate not only the bar line, but, as well, all musical situations in which the grouping of rhythmic values can become enslaved by metric overemphasis.

- Newton’s laws of motion apply to music. There are many reasons for rhythmic imprecision in an ensemble. Some of these are due to sheer technical issues while others are more conceptual in nature. In fast tempo music, it is generally the case that the players with the more active rhythms will tend to rush, and conversely, those who have slower-moving rhythms will tend to lag. This is largely because Newton’s laws of motion apply to music. If one is resting or playing relatively inactive stuff, inertia sets in. (Bodies at rest want to remain so.) Meanwhile, the folks with the quicker rhythms too easily pick up a head of steam, and in so doing want to move ahead. (Bodies which are in motion can easily get out of control.)

#### 4. **Articulation**

- In staccato passages where all of the players have the same rhythms, those who have repeated pitches will have to play extra short to match those who have changing pitches. This is because the ear tends to connect repeated notes unless there is a well-defined gap between them.
- In staccato, there must be a space *before*, as well as *after* the note. In sostenuto, the player must have an inaudible but unmistakable feeling of crescendo inside each note and, also from each note to the next.
- An accent is achieved not only by applying stress to a given note, but also by taking weight off the notes around it.

#### 5. **Dynamics**

Dynamics are about context. Whereas it is possible to have perfect pitch, it is not possible to have perfect dynamics. Therefore, the conductor can greatly enhance the audibility of changes in dynamic by careful management of the context. As an example, it is not possible to create a crescendo unless there is room for dynamic growth. Thus, one could say that “crescendo” means “play soft,” or at least, “play softer.” Similarly, “diminuendo” could mean “play loud.” “Subito forte” could mean “stay soft,” etc.

## 6. Energy in Music

Music may be seen as a process of creating and releasing energy over time. Some ways of describing this phenomenon are:

Inhalation	Exhalation
Tension	Relaxation
Compression	Expansion
Moving forward	Holding back
Gathering (energy)	Dispersing (energy)
Building (energy)	Releasing (energy)
Pushing	Pulling

There are many ways to gather and release these fields of energy. The following are some of the devices or mechanisms for doing so:

### **Increasing or Building Energy Comes From:**

- Rising pitch content, melodies, or themes
- Getting louder
- Rhythmic acceleration
- Increased rhythmic complexity
- Syncopation
- Dissonance
- Contrary motion
- Chromaticism
- Expanding the overall range or ambitus of pitches in the texture (soprano line and bass line reach extremes of register)
- Enlarging the orchestration

### **Releasing or Letting Go of Energy Comes From:**

- Falling pitch content, melodies, or themes
- Getting softer
- Rhythmic deceleration
- Rhythmic simplification
- Consonance
- Parallel motion
- Diatonicism
- Contracting the overall range (ambitus) of pitches in the texture (soprano line and bass line converge on the middle register).
- Decreasing the orchestration

The composer employs these devices to provide a sense of direction, purpose, and drama in a piece of music. The conductor (interpreter), too, manipulates these devices in order to make even clearer the composer's intentions. These devices may work in tandem or even in opposition. Climaxes are typically staged by getting louder, increasing dissonance, expanding the orchestra, and, as well, rhythmic acceleration. Yet, at a penultimate moment (in a piece, phrase, section, movement, etc.), it is often helpful to pull back on or stretch the tempo and, in effect, slow down not only the pace but the underlying rhythmic momentum in order to allow sufficient time for a final crescendo to create a truly fulfilling climax. In this case, then, the conductor chooses to exploit the epic power of dynamics to increase energy while holding in check the locomotive value of rhythmic acceleration and complexity.

## **7. Tempo and Character**

One of the greatest challenges for conductors has to do with choosing tempi. Beyond any marked tempo indications, there seems to be some elusive but organic feeling about how fast a piece should go. When a piece “feels” out of kilter, the tendency is to assume that the problem is tempo. The piece (movement, section, etc.) can feel too fast, even frantic. Or, conversely, it can feel lumbering, even somewhat inert. While tempo is a critical issue unto itself, when the tempo is right, one usually does not notice it. When one’s attention is drawn to the tempo, there is a problem, but maybe not with the tempo. The cause of noticing tempo has as much to do with character as it does with speed. For example, much fast-paced music is linked to basic dance impulse. If the piece “dances,” it can go at a variety of tempi. If it does not “dance,” the temptation is to try to fix it by adjusting the speed of the beat, commonly to go faster. Actually, the core solution may require a revision of articulation, rhythmic interpretation, and/or overall style of execution. On the other hand, slower-paced music, which derives its essence from vocal traditions, may appear to drag. This may not be so much because the tempo is too deliberate, but rather, because the music is being expressed in a prosaic manner: it does not “sing.” Again, trying to rectify the problem through tempo alone can lead to an endless set of misestimates about pacing, none of which is really satisfying. The answer might better be found through phrasal shaping, dynamic refinements, and/or changes in timbre more likely to produce a lyrical character.

## **8. Shape and Line**

Music which is built primarily on sustained thematic gestures requires careful handling in order not to interrupt the feeling of flow. The propagation of line is critically dependent on creating expansive musical arcs which do not contain inappropriate accents. Said more simply, to create a long line, one must not “sit down” or make stress points along the way. In wind playing, because of the natural tendency for breath and fingers to punctuate the sound, creating a long line is especially difficult. To overcome this problem, it is important to understand two core concepts:

- a. To make a sustained line, each note must grow into the next. That is to say, there must be a subtle crescendo from note 1 to note 2, from note 2 to note 3, from note 3 to note 4, etc. Otherwise, the phrase will sag in transit.
- b. Second, but just as important, there must be a subtle quieting of dynamic at the precise point of shift from one note to the next, in order to cushion the impact. Otherwise, an unintended accent will occur at the attack point of the new note, because of the immediately preceding crescendo.



# **Beyond Measure 7: Lessons that Linger**

## **Philosophical Premise**

Larry J. Livingston

For whom are we doing this?

- We are doing it for our students.

What do we want for them?

- We want to make each of our students independent of us and independent of the ensemble, in order to make possible for them a lifelong love affair/involvement with music.
- We want to enlighten and enable each of them to seek musical nourishment as a doer, maker, and listener, and to become a carrier of the magic into the world.
- We want to make a contribution to their lives which will leave them better adults, better able to cope, and inspired to pass on to their children the irreducible miracle of music.
- Ultimately, we want to help them forge their own legacies of goodness across the land.

How can we do this?

- We need to create experiences which are so compelling that the students will be able to harvest them forever.

What objectives best serve that goal?

- Through conceptual teaching, to illuminate/show/demonstrate how music works, how musicians acquire skill, interpret notation, interact in a musical environment, and develop sophisticated auditory cognition.
- To link music to the larger mysteries of the universe.
- To lay the groundwork for ongoing participation in doing or making music.
- To grow enlightened and motivated listeners/consumers of music.
- To demonstrate by our behavior the possible congruence of doing well and doing good

How do we realize these objectives? We must develop pedagogies which:

- Focus on concepts rather than on specific circumstances
- Free students from the need for a teacher
- Engage the mind on a musically holistic level
- Find truths, ideas, and/or premises in music which are also relevant to other disciplines or pursuits (e.g., the Fibonacci series, golden mean, phi, Newton's laws of motion)
- Establish music-making configurations which are individually- or small group-based
- Make composition a core part of the program
- Make improvisation a core part of the program
- Encourage multiple instrument study
- Take an eclectic approach to repertoire
- Ask everyone in the ensemble to be a "conductor" as an integral part of rehearsals
- Include analytical and historical information as core in the daily lesson plan
- Merge performance-based rehearsing/teaching with analysis
- Teach students to read a musical score
- Embrace the reality that teaching music is a subset of the larger phenomenon, teaching life
- Make a priority out of helping each student become the best version of his or her unique self

Remember, it is about them.