Dedicated to Paul Whiteman

Rhapsody
in Blue™

Setting for Piano and Wind Ensemble

George Gershwin

Wind Accompaniment Scored
by Donald Hunsberger

Setting for 23 players based upon the 1924 Paul Whiteman version and the 1926 theater orchestra version

Instrumentation

1 - Conductor
1 - Piano Solo - PS0165
   (included with score)
PARTS CONTAINED ON
CD-ROM*
   (with license to reproduce parts)
1 - C Flute 1
1 - C Flute 2/Piccolo
1 - Oboe
1 - Bassoon
1 - Bb Clarinet 1
1 - Bb Clarinet 2
1 - Bb Bass Clarinet

1 - Saxophone 1
   (Eb Alto, Bb Soprano)
1 - Saxophone 2
   (Eb Alto, Bb Soprano)
1 - Saxophone 3
   (Bb Tenor, Bb Soprano)
1 - Saxophone 4
   (Eb Baritone)
1 - Horn in F 1
1 - Horn in F 2
1 - Bb Trumpet 1
1 - Bb Trumpet 2

1 - Trombone 1
1 - Trombone 2
1 - Tuba
1 - Baritone
1 - Bass
1 - Trumpet Set (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Gong, Bells)
1 - Timpani
1 - Piano/Celeste

* See system requirements and instructions on page 70.
Donald Hunsberger is the Conductor and Music Director of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and the Eastman Wind Orchestra. He has conducted the EWE in sixteen recordings released on Sony Classical, CBS Masterworks, DOG, Phillips, Mercury and Donata among others and has led the Ensemble on numerous highly acclaimed concert tours, including six in Japan and one, with Wytton Marsalis as soloist, to the major concert halls of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Montreal and Toronto. June 1998 marked the Ensemble’s most recent concert tour to Japan, once again under sponsorship of Sony Music Foundation and Eastman Kodak Japan.

He has been deeply involved in wind band development and repertoire stimulation throughout his career. As a Past-President of CEDNA and as a Board member of CEDNA, WASBE and the Conductor’s Guild, he has created opportunities for composers and performers alike to perform and hear new compositions written with contemporary instrumental techniques currently available to conductors today.

Hunsberger is also the Music Director of the Eastman Dryden Orchestra, an ensemble specializing in live orchestral accompaniment to silent films. He works with the Film Department of the George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography, and has scored more than a dozen major silent films. He has conducted silent film with orchestra concert featuring such classic silent masterpieces as The Phantom of the Opera, The Mark of Zorro, City Lights, Potash, The Hunchback of Notre Dame and The General with the National Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Virginia Symphony and the North Carolina Orchestra, among others.

**To The Conductor**

The Wind Library is pleased to offer two different accomplishments to George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue, each drawn from authentic original sources and manuscripts. Thomas Verrier wrote his concert band/wind ensemble version (DH9804B) based upon research conducted in the personal scores housed in the Library of Congress. Allan McMurray and the University of Colorado Wind Ensemble performed as part of the International Conference of WASBE in Hamamatsu, Japan in July 1995 and when I heard this performance, I instantly knew that I wished to include his scoring in the Wind Library as a companion piece to the version that I was undertaking which is based on the earliest extant score of the original version (DH9804A). I was searching to create a linear, muscular, jazz-oriented setting (utilizing a smaller ensemble) to complement Tom’s more full rich large ensemble approach. It is hoped that the publication of both of these accomplishments will further enrich the wind band repertoire.

**The Theater Orchestra**

Since I have been working in the silent film accompaniment area since 1980, I have become extremely well associated with the theater orchestras and their repertoire, as this was the primary extant repertoire utilized by local orchestrists directing for show presentations, film accompaniments, etc. during the 1915-1929 silent film period. Publications were arranged and scored for two different sized ensembles: the large orchestra with a full wind and brass, i.e. flute, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets (cornets) and trombone, along with the standard string orchestral voices, plus piano, harp, and percussion; and the small orchestra: flute, 1 clarinet, 1 trumpet (cornet) and trombone, plus string bass, keyboard and percussion. Grofé used these instrumentations plus several woodwind players who doubled on various saxophones, oboe, clarinet, etc.

It is hoped that conductors will study, compare and perform each of the two versions, especially with copies of extant scores of Grofé’s original editions at hand, and that these will provide not just one avenue to perform the Rhapsody with a wind accompaniment, but now two different approaches.

Donald Hunsberger

The performance parts for DH9804 are available on the CD-ROM included with the full score.

The performance parts for DH9804B are available on rental from the Eastman School of Music Ensemble Library.

**Program Notes**

On January 4, 1924, Ira Gershwin brought a brief item in the New York Tribune to the attention of his younger brother George. Its heading read, “Whiteman Judges Name. Committee Will Decide ‘What is American Music.’” According to the advertisement (purely a media play), Paul Whiteman had assembled an impressive group of musicians including Sergei Rachmaninoff and Jascha Heifetz to witness a concert of new American music. This concert was to be presented on the afternoon of February 12; just five weeks away. Included would be “a jazz concerto” on which George Gershwin was currently “at work.” Bury into his show Stout Little Devil, Gershwin had not begun to compose such a concerto, though he and Whiteman had casually talked about his writing a special piece for the band. Gershwin began work on Rhapsody in Blue on Monday, January 7. Though a gifted melodist, he was ill-equipped to score the concerto. To assist him, Whiteman offered the services of his chief arranger, Ferde Grofé, who completed the score on February 4. The first of five rehearsals was held immediately, during which several modifications were made both to Gershwin’s music and Grofé’s arrangement. Most notable among these is the change in the opening clarinet solo. Gershwin had originally written a seventeen-note slurring, however, Ross Gould (Whiteman’s tenor reed player) improvised the signature clarinet “wall.” According to contemporary reviews, the concert was rather dull, but Rhapsody in Blue was received enthusiastically by the audience, which included Jascha Heifetz, Victor Herberts, Fritz Kreisler, Sergei Rachmaninoff, John Philip Sousa, Leopold Stokowski and Igor Stravinsky. There were subsequent performances on March 7 and April 21, and a recording was made for Victor Records on June 10. A second recording was scheduled in 1927 during which Gershwin and Whiteman had strong disagreements. During those three years, Whiteman had changed the work with which Gershwin was dissatisfied. Their argument at the session resulted in Whiteman walking off the podium. The recording did take place with Gershwin performing the solo and the Whiteman Band playing the accompaniment, but Nathaniel Shilkret, Victor’s director of light music, served as conductor.

In ensuing years, there were a number of versions of Rhapsody in Blue produced to satisfy public demand for as many accessible renditions as possible. As the work’s popularity increased, the desire for a published large ensemble version led to Grofé’s 1926 setting for theater orchestra. This was followed subsequently by an expansion of the theater orchestra score for full symphony orchestra and as a version for concert band (1938) both by Grofé as well.

Not until 1987 was Grofé’s 1924 arrangement for the Whiteman Band published (in facsimile). Since its availability, this first scoring has been performed regularly. However, in the sixty-three years between its premiere and publication, this version was all but abandoned. Whiteman himself did not adhere to this arrangement. As early as 1926, he began distorting the piece, which had become his signature tune. He kept adding instrumental parts to the first version as the instrumentation of his orchestras changed. More than ninety parts exist for the various instrumental combinations Whiteman had at his command. While the first score is novel, it cannot be considered the definitive version of the work, anymore than Gershwin’s two-piano manuscript. This manuscript was altered, presumably with the approval of the composer, by Grofé both melodically and harmonically. In fact, Grofé’s version was never performed at a concert, even after it was improved at the piano for theatrical performances of Rhapsody in Blue. The original piano cadenza, and the written ensemble arrangement evolved through the five days of rehearsals. Grofé was a gifted arranger (later teaching orchestration at Juilliard) whose commercial interests were often more important than the interests of the composer. But as Gershwin’s personal copy of Grofé’s orchestration score (housed in the Library of Congress) has been used as a primary research source. Select soloing substitutions found in Grofé’s band setting have also been incorporated along with scoring options from the manuscripts of his theater orchestra and Whiteman Band versions (both also in the Library of Congress).

Thomas Verrier