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very sure of himself before he was to concert in Chapel Hill. age of 36, he is the ar- tor of a high-quality ne between Washing- pite a decidedly unsen- Wert, Ohio isn't New iversity is hardly the

ermann's opinion of the orchestra than its pised the arrogant at- a said in a June inter- Raleigh. Now he clari- at I dislike the aura of

ermann is willing to tors. "I think it's good" he said. "It gives the llows me to program cted to conduct."

is first love is German chestra is through the thirds of the works to Symphony this season osers leaning toward a nermann said, "I'd like nd, of course, Bruckner

ic in this year's reper- said, "Well, we're do- son, but not in Chapel by Elgar, and some of which are quite beauti- by Tippett. He's a very

aid, future seasons will concern in planning an re crucial for the finan- mermann said of his eve financial stability, e people is a first-class formance, and through der financial base."

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by of the North Carolina Symphony
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Music floats through the air

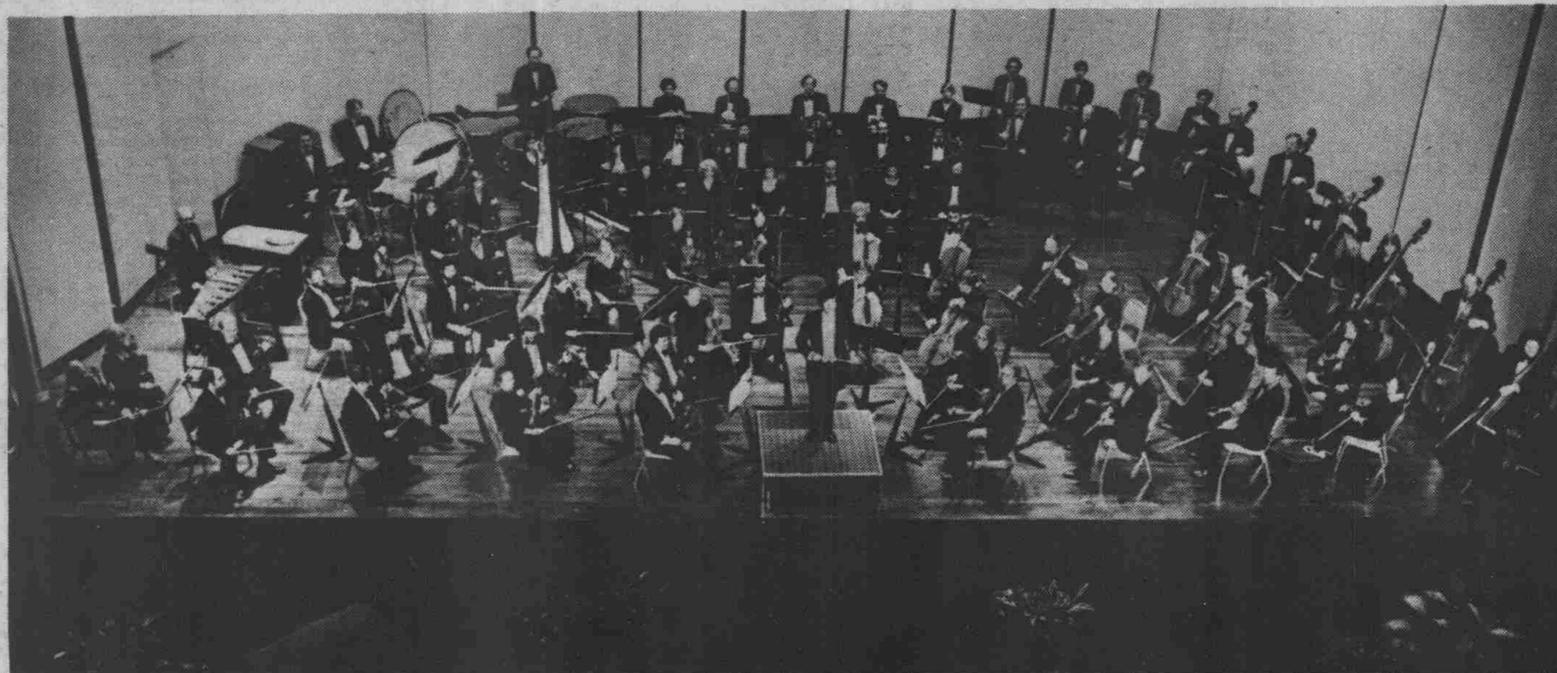


Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Symphony

Formal attire for the North Carolina Symphony performs with Associate Conductor James Ogle

Half a century old

NC Symphony comes home for its birthday

By JEFF GROVE

The North Carolina Symphony is a stylish operation. Two occurrences from last Wednesday's concert in Memorial Hall serve as examples. As seems to be traditional, the audience applauded concertmaster Paul Gorski when he came onstage to tune the orchestra. Then, when it came time to open the concert with "The Star-Spangled Banner," all of the orchestra members who could stand while playing did so.

Style was in order for the concert. The Symphony had returned to its birthplace to celebrate its first half-century of existence.

On May 14, 1932, 48 musicians sat on the stage of Hill Hall Auditorium in front of conductor Lamar Stringfield. They were a varied group. Some were professionals while others were amateurs. Some were still in high school, and others were already well-established in their careers.

Getting into the group was no easy job. "The musicians were chosen from among the best in the state," said William Mitchell, who played the trombone in that original group. Mitchell was present at the 1982 concert, along with 12 other members of the original N.C. Symphony.

"I roomed with a fellow who was the mayor of Wilson, so of course he was a good bit older than me," Mitchell said, pointing out the diversity of the group.

Unlike today's Symphony members, the players in the first concert were not paid. "We hoped that someday the orchestra members would be paid, but we were willing to do it just for the excitement," Mitchell said. He said that musicians' salaries in 1932 started at \$15 per week, with the best players netting \$18.50 per week. But volunteer status did not decrease the commitment of the musicians to the group, Mitchell added.

French horn player Raymond Brietz Jr. was probably more excited than Mitchell by the first concert. He met his wife during rehearsals.

"It was exciting enough for me to come from Charlotte to Chapel Hill. But then on the first night of rehearsals I met Raymond, so that sort of increased the excitement," Mrs. Brietz said.

After their marriage, the Brietzes stayed involved in music — he in the Greensboro public schools, and she in their church.

Since Brietz was so involved in music in the schools, he especially admires today's Symphony for its free concerts offered to public school audiences. "The only way you're going to train cultural arts performers is to start early," he said.

The school performances are one indicator of how much the N.C. Symphony has developed in 50 years. Robert Phay, president of the Chapel Hill-Orange County chapter of the North

Carolina Symphony Society, explained that the concerts are not really free. Someone has to pay the musicians.

"The evening concerts (in the Chapel Hill subscription series) help fund the daytime concerts to educate school children," Phay said. "So people who go to our regular concerts are helping us out in that way."

"The Symphony today is a precision instrument."

**William Mitchell
an original Symphony member**

Today the Symphony consists of 66 players, a staff of three conductors, and a flock of office workers who make their home in Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium. All season ticket holders are members of the North Carolina Symphony Society. Local chapters of the Society make arrangements for concerts in their areas and take charge of selling season and individual tickets.

With each concert costing an individual chapter \$8,000, breaking even might seem a problem. But even high ticket prices — \$8 for the general public — have not kept people away. The first Chapel Hill concert this season was actually oversold, and people were turned away when the box office ran out of tickets.

The audience is there. It isn't, however, what you might expect. There is the usual quota of little blue-haired old ladies who drag unwilling husbands in to see and to be seen, but these are in the minority. Plenty of students were present for the recent 50th anniversary concert. And why not? Student ticket prices have been held down to \$2.50, courtesy of the Carolina Union.

Pops concerts also demonstrate widening appeal of classical music. The Union sponsors one such concert in Chapel Hill each year in the fall semester. This year's concert takes place Sunday at 4 p.m. in Forest Theatre. The atmosphere is far from highbrow. People arrive early with picnic meals. Dress ranges from three-piece suits to sweat suits. People are there to share in the musical experience, not to be seen and to be recognized on the society page.

From a volunteer group which finished its first season with a bank balance of \$28.14, the North Carolina Symphony has grown into a complex professional organization with a budget of over \$2 million.

The Symphony survived the Depression first on Federal Emergency Relief Administration grants, then on the Work Projects Administration's use of the Symphony to employ out-of-work players and music teachers. Dr. Benjamin Swalin took over as conductor in 1939 and increased the orchestra's exposure as an

educational group. When Swalin retired in 1971, John Gosling succeeded him and led the Symphony to a position among the nation's major orchestras.

At the Sept. 15 concert, William Mitchell said that he could not compare the performances by the original group with those offered by today's Symphony. "The Symphony today is a precision instrument," he said.

At the close of the concert, the Symphony's present artistic director and principal conductor, Gerhardt Zimmermann, offered thoughts for the past and the future.

"We would like to play three encores for you," he said. "The first we dedicate to all the former Symphony musicians. The second is dedicated to Dr. and Mrs. Swalin for their years of service to the Symphony. The third... is for the next 50 years."

The North Carolina Symphony has already performed one concert in Chapel Hill this fall. Four more are scheduled for the remainder of the academic year.

This Sunday, Gerhardt Zimmermann will conduct a free pops concert at 4 p.m. in Forest Theatre. The program will feature Saint-Saens' *Princess Jaune Overture*, Rachmaninoff's *Caprice Bohemien*, Herold's *Zampa Overture*, a medley of songs from *The Sound of Music*, and Sousa's *Liberty Bell March*.

"We hoped that someday the orchestra members would be paid, but we were willing to do it just for the excitement."

**William Mitchell
an original Symphony member**

Zimmermann will conduct again for an all-Beethoven concert at 8 p.m. Oct. 20 in Memorial Hall. Soloist Richard Luby will perform in the *Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra*, and the Durham Civic Choral Society will be heard in the *Symphony No. 9 in D Minor*.

January 14 will bring another 8 p.m. Memorial Hall concert, this one with a program of music by North Carolina composers. Robert Suderberg will conduct his *Concerto: Night Voyage after Baudelaire for Chamber Orchestra and Soprano*. UNC music professor Roger Hannay then takes over the podium for his *Symphony No. 5 ("American Classic")*. To conclude the program,

Robert Ward, one of the busiest living American opera composers, will direct a performance of his *Symphony No. 2*.

This season will close on April 14 with an all-Tchaikovsky program, again at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. James Ogle will be the conductor for the *Symphony No. 6 in B Minor ("Pathetique")* and the *Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor for Piano and Orchestra*. UNC piano professor Francis Whang will be the soloist for the concerto.

Tickets for all the Memorial Hall programs will be on sale at the Carolina Union box office and at the door. Admission for students is \$2.50. For more information, call the box office at 962-1449.

Jeff Grove is assistant arts editor of The Daily Tar Heel.



North Carolina Symphony prepares for an outdoor concert

Weekend, Sept

Music com even in re

By LEAH TALLEY

The piano player is a strange combination of loose body rolling over the keys, his hands flying. The orchestra, playing Rachmaninoff music takes over, becomes a life of its own.

The conductor then holds up his arms, breathing, a few straggling gasping notes. "No, no, no. He's very free here," Gerhardt Zimmermann says. The conductor of the North Carolina Symphony held in Memorial Hall, the music is suddenly musicians, dressed in T-shirts or jeans, and may live and breathe on its own, but it's not.

Once you realize the fact that the music then it must be considered as a creation of a finely tuned genesis between the musician and the conductor.

In live performances, the public sees the conductor waves his arms before the music starts. But before each concert, the N.C. Symphony, during these sessions, magic becomes.

According to Jackson Parkhurst, director of the N.C. Symphony, the conductor and the symphony is extremely important. The conductor becomes crucial.

"What the audience sees is the tip of the iceberg. This is where a conductor will make or break a performance."

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