

# floats through the air

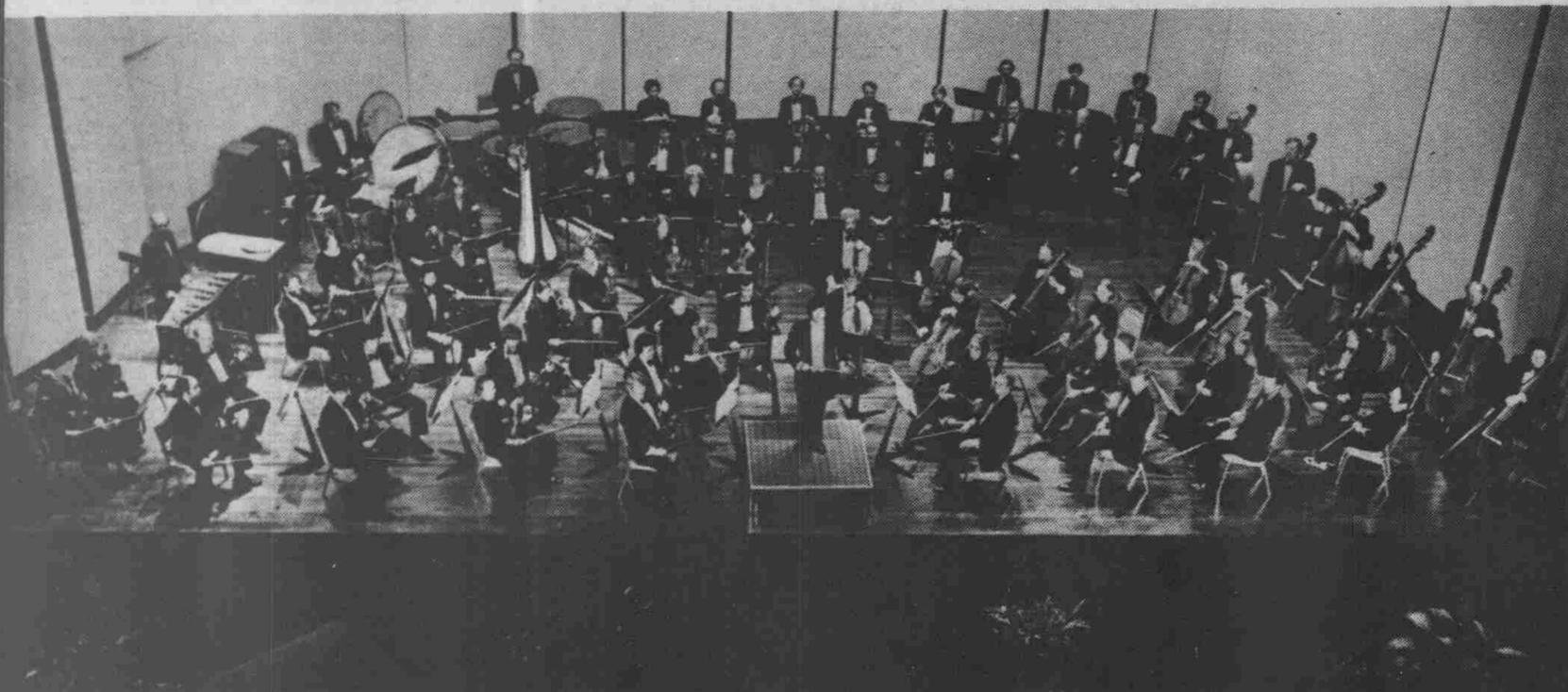


Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Symphony

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

## hony comes home for its birthday

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," Ogle said. "So people who go to our regular concerts are helping 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, making 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."

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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*.



Photo courtesy of the North Carolina Symphony

**North Carolina Symphony  
prepares for an outdoor concert**

Weekend, September 23, 1982

## Music comes to life even in rehearsals

By LEAH TALLEY

The piano player is a strange combination of tense shoulders and a loose body rolling over the keys, his hands attacking yet caressing the ivories. The orchestra, playing Rachmaninoff, seems to be fading away; its music takes over, becomes a life of its own.

The conductor then holds up his left hand and the music stops breathing, a few straggling, gasping notes sprinkled here and there.

"No, no, no. He's very free here," Gerhardt Zimmermann, guest-conductor of the North Carolina Symphony, says. At a rehearsal like this one held in Memorial Hall, the music is suddenly seen as a creation. And the musicians, dressed in T-shirts or jeans, are seen as real people. The music may live and breathe on its own, but it is their creation.

Once you realize the fact that the music doesn't spring to life by itself, then it must be considered as a creation. In a professional symphony, it is a finely tuned genesis between the musicians and their conductor.

In live performances, the public sees only the final, polished product. The conductor waves his arms before the ready orchestra and magic occurs. But before each concert, the N.C. Symphony usually rehearses four times. During these sessions, magic becomes work.

According to Jackson Parkhurst, director of education and assistant conductor for the N.C. Symphony, the rapport between the conductor and the symphony is extremely important. But in rehearsal, the role of the conductor becomes crucial.

"What the audience sees is the tip of the iceberg," Parkhurst said. "The most important time a conductor is in front of an orchestra is in rehearsal. This is where a conductor will make or break himself with an orchestra."

Rehearsal is work. And work in creating symphonic music means interplay between conductor and musicians in developing the magic and mystery of Rachmaninoff or Mozart or Bach. The notes of any piece of music are there on the printed page for anyone with skill to play. But in the right hands, they fill the air instead of lying lifeless on the music stand.

"The musicians know how the music goes. It's up to the conductor to make them know how it sounds," Parkhurst said.

During rehearsal, Zimmermann again stopped the music. "Woodwinds, what you have is ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum, ba-bum. Be careful," he said. The symphony began to play again. And again, Zimmerman halted the flow of notes.

"The attack gets up here late," he said, pointing to his head. Here, Zimmermann allowed insight into the finished work. In creating the music, the conductor's vision of the final work molds the musicians' artistry. The conductor tries to recreate the symphony playing in his head with the orchestra before his arms.

"The musician needs to play his best, of course," Anita Hoffman, violinist for the N.C. Symphony, said. "But the actual interpretation should come from the conductor."

Sometimes the balance between the conductor's interpretation of a piece of music and the musician's playing can be a precarious one, especially if the musician disagrees with the conductor's vision.

"Sometimes I don't think it makes sense," Hoffman said during a rehearsal break. "But you give the conductor what he asks for. The musician needs to be able to alter his playing to the conductor's interpretation."

When the lights come on and curtain next rises on the N.C. Symphony, think just a moment of rehearsal — Gerhardt Zimmermann exhorting the symphony, "Then the last two notes... ya pa pa PA PUM."

The music of a symphony can be like a magic carpet, carrying you off into a dreamland. But each thread in that carpet is carefully woven by the hands of many magicians, under the guidance of their conductor.

Leah Talley is arts editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*.