

Despite this impressive list, in the years that followed, significantly fewer guest artists were brought in to perform with the band. Instead, soloists from within the band were used with some regularity, and beginning in 1952 Eddie Fisher was frequently featured. Nevertheless, several other famous artists, including Leontyne Price, did appear with the band in subsequent seasons of *Freedom Sings*.

Paul Hindemith's Symphony in B flat.

Following the success of the inaugural *Freedom Sings* series, in late November 1950 Keith Wright, a French horn player in the band who also assisted with the band's public relations, was working with agencies in New York in an attempt to book other famous guest artists for the upcoming season. As he states, however, "Business wasn't too great" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). A graduate of the Yale School of Music, Wright decided to see if he could coax Paul Hindemith into appearing with the band as a guest conductor for the upcoming season.

As a result, late in 1950 Wright made a trip to New Haven, Connecticut to propose the idea to Hindemith. In deference to the composer's administrator at Yale, Wright first met with Dean Bruce Simonds to inform him of his intentions. As the Dean was a renowned concert pianist himself, Wright also extended an invitation to Simonds to appear on the upcoming season. Simonds gave Wright permission to approach Hindemith regarding a potential performance with the band. In addition, Simonds agreed to appear as a soloist with the band in the 1951 *Freedom Sings* series.

Within a couple of days following his meeting with Hindemith's Dean, Wright visited the composer at his home. Telling Wright that he was far too busy to conduct, particularly at the time of year that Wright wanted to book him, Hindemith initially

rejected the invitation to appear with the band. The composer added that he was becoming disenchanted with the United States, and Wright's "impression was that American students did not arouse his enthusiasm" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). Hindemith then confided to Wright that he was most likely going to accept an offer from the University of Zurich and at least spend alternate years at Yale and Zurich before eventually leaving the United States altogether.

Remembering the weather as "cold and gray" and Hindemith's living room as "dark," Wright recounted that "the mood of the man was important" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). As Wright sat with Hindemith and his wife, however, the composer gradually "sold himself the idea, piecemeal" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). Wright stated that Hindemith recalled being a musician in a small German military band during World War I and fondly reflected upon the times he had experienced as a military bandsman.

Eventually Hindemith inquired if Wright could possibly book him as a guest conductor later in the series, and he mentioned the *Geschwindmarsche* from his *Sinfonia Serena* as a possible piece to conduct with the band. Following Wright's assurances that the schedule could be adjusted based upon the composer's availability, Hindemith then asked Wright a long series of questions regarding the band and its instrumentation. Mostly, however, Hindemith wanted to know about the quality of performers in the band. In recalling this Wright stated that "I remember his deep concern with the degree of skill of certain instruments; he was outlining ideas in his mind already" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). Towards the end of their meeting, Hindemith

finally “ventured (again, no promises) that if he could squeeze the time, he might even write a little something” (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967).

At the conclusion of the meeting Hindemith asked Wright to stay in touch with Mrs. Hindemith regarding this matter, and he indicated that whatever he wrote would be dedicated to The United States Army Band. Within a very short time thereafter, a performance date for Hindemith’s appearance was secured for April 5, 1951. In addition, Mrs. Hindemith informed Wright that the piece that her husband was writing was to be a full-scale symphony for band.

Work on the symphony was completed less than four weeks prior to its premiere, and Hindemith spent two days in rehearsals with the band prior to the concert. Recalling those rehearsals, Gilbert Mitchell, the trumpet soloist for the premiere, described Hindemith as “warm and generous” (Mitchell, 1998, p. 21).

Between rehearsals of the new work, Hindemith met with a reporter from *The Evening Star*. Of that meeting, the journalist wrote,

The composer still speaks with a slight German accent left from before the time, early in the Hitler regime, when he had to leave his native country for writing “un-German” music. Asked why the “something” requested became a symphony, he explained,

“Oh, I am just returning to one of my early loves. I used to be a clarinetist in a German Army Band during World War I.” (“Hindemith to lead Army Band,” 1951)

That evening, the concert in the Departmental Auditorium began at 8:30 p.m. The program was as follows:

March – Chimes of Liberty Edwin Franko Goldman
Symphony No. 8 in b minor (First Movement) Franz Schubert
La Tarde Domingo Santos
March in B-Flat from Music for Band (1927) Paul Hindemith
March from Symphonia Serena (1946) Paul Hindemith

Mr. Hindemith, conducting

W. P. Bartel, Secretary, Interstate Commerce Commission

March – In Storm and Sunshine J. C. Heed
Es Tont Ein Voller Harfenklang, Op. 17, No. 1 Johannes Brahms

Sergeant DeWayne Fulton, harp Sergeant Warren Smith, horn

The United States Army Band Chorus

1st Lieutenant Samuel Loboda, conducting

O Worship the King J. Michael Haydn
Symphony in B-Flat for Concert Band (1951) Paul Hindemith

I. Moderately fast, with vigor

II. Andante grazioso

III. Fugue – Rather broad

Mr. Hindemith, conducting

The concert was narrated, and each piece on the program was introduced with a few short comments. The premiere of Hindemith's *Symphony in B flat for Concert Band* was preceded by the following remarks:

The new symphony is conceived in much the same manner as if it had been written for symphony orchestra. It is in three movements. The first is marked

“Moderately fast with vigor.” The second begins “Andante grazioso” and continues to a section marked “Fast and gay” and the Finale is in the form of a brilliant double fugue. Ladies and gentlemen, we present once again Mr. Paul Hindemith directing The United States Army Band in the World Premiere of his Symphony in B flat for Concert Band. Mr. Hindemith.

Reviews of the new work were very enthusiastic. A critic for *The Washington Post*, Paul Hume, observed:

The new symphony ... takes its place with the few real works of such a genius in the field of band literature. It is music of that contrapuntal skill, that sonorous richness that is the label of Hindemith. It is to the credit of the Army Band that its members were able to present this difficult music under the composer’s direction in a manner that did them credit. Intricacies of rhythms, wide range demands, and the whole newness of the idiom to the men presented problems that they solved, for the most part, with high ability. (Hume, p. 7B)

After the premiere, Hindemith gave Curry a manuscript score to the symphony. On the front cover, the composer inscribed the following: “To Captain Curry after a very pleasant time with his Band and with many thanks. Paul Hindemith. April 1951.” In addition, all of the releases associated with the premiere of the symphony contained the phrase “written and dedicated to The United States Army Band” or “written and dedicated to Captain Hugh Curry and The United States Army Band” (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). Nevertheless, when the work was published, no such dedication was printed on the score.

As the person who coordinated Hindemith's appearance and the symphony's premiere, however, Keith Wright insisted that the work was indeed written and dedicated to Curry and The United States Army Band. In attempting to explain the omission, Wright noted that the symphony was composed without knowledge of the composer's publisher. According to Wright, the reason that Hindemith gave for this was "because if he wrote anything a complex arrangement of handling it would be necessary, involving them, into which I [Wright] would have to take part" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). Thus, Hindemith elected to compose the work without consulting his publishers. When they found out about the symphony, however, "Associated was flabbergasted about it" (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967). Wright speculated, therefore, that it was the publishers that elected to omit the phrase "written and dedicated to Captain Hugh Curry and The United States Army Band" from the printed score (K. Wright, personal communication, December 2, 1967).

While this is conjecture on the part of Wright, in early 1951 Hindemith was indeed at odds with his publishers. At the time, in fact, the composer was owed \$25,000 from AMP and \$13,000 from Schott (Skelton, p. 214). Of this, Hindemith declared:

None of this sum would I have seen in the foreseeable future, and it would have continued to mount up if I had not gone into the matter myself. I consider it an utter disgrace, and I feel that publishers who do their best to hold back someone's well-earned money should be skinned ruthlessly, especially when they are as greedy for their own advantage as the AMP are. *Well, it won't happen again!* [...]. (Skelton, p. 214)

By late 1952 Hindemith's feud with his publishers had been resolved (Skelton, p. 215). Nevertheless, it is clear that, at the time he was composing the *Symphony in B flat for Concert Band*, he was engaged in a bitter dispute with both Schott and AMP. And, while it does not fully explain why the dedication of the work was omitted, it at least supports Wright's assertion regarding Hindemith and his publishers.

Following the success of the Hindemith premiere, on September 8, 1951, Curry sent the following letter to Igor Stravinsky:

Dear Mr. Stravinsky:

During our "Freedom Sings" concerts early this year, we had an opportunity to ask Mr. Paul Hindemith to appear with our organization in the role of guest conductor. He accepted the invitation, and, what is even more significant, he wrote a new Symphony for Band that he conducted in its premiere performance on 5 April 1951.

We have endeavored to have these concerts in every way live up to the noble theme for which they are named. During the first two seasons we have had the assistance of such outstanding artists as: Ania Dorfman, Howard Mitchell, Gyorgy Sandor, Percy Grainger, and Helen Jepson.

With the great value of Mr. Hindemith's contribution in our minds, we feel that the meager repertory of major works for Symphonic Band would be greatly enhanced if one of the world's leading composers were to have a part in the series now being planned for the early spring of 1952.

The name of Igor Stravinsky immediately comes to mind.

We should be greatly honored if you would consider writing the feature work for the series, and, if you should happen to be on the East Coast during February or March 1952, to have you come to conduct the premier [*sic.*] performance, perhaps with another Stravinsky work for wind instruments or one that you might feel suitable for Band transcription. We would, of course, arrange to pay the expenses connected with such a visit.

The programs are presented in the beautiful Departmental Auditorium on Constitution Avenue in Washington, and are broadcast throughout the country.

Eagerly awaiting your reply, I am,

Respectfully yours,

Hugh J. Curry. (H. J. Curry, personal communication, September 8, 1951)

Responding for the composer on September 17, 1951, Aaron Sapiro acknowledged the receipt of Curry's letter to Stravinsky indicating that the composer was in Europe and was not likely to return until the beginning of November. Sapiro promised Curry, however, that he would "see to it that your letter reaches him at that time; and he will probably answer directly to you" (A. Sapiro, personal communication, September 17, 1951). In addition, Sapiro was clear to replace Curry's apparently errant spelling of Stravinsky with the spelling of "Strawinsky" thickly underlined in pen. Nevertheless, it does not appear that Strawinsky himself ever responded to Curry's invitation, and certainly no new work for band by the composer emerged as a result.

In another attempt to solicit a new piece for band by a prominent composer, on October 5, 1951 Curry sent Samuel Barber a letter almost identical to the one he had sent Strawinsky a month earlier. To this, Barber himself replied:

My Dear Captain Curry:

I am interested to know of your performances of good music with the Army Band and wish I could contribute some more of it your repertoire. But, unfortunately, I am so tied up with already-arranged commissions that I am unable to accede to your kind and flattering request. However should I have something for band sometime, you may be sure I'll promptly let you know about it.

With kind regards and apologies for this very late answer.

Sincerely,

Samuel Barber. (S. Barber, personal communication, November 20, 1951)

Thus, Curry's efforts to follow the Hindemith premiere with other new works did not yield the desired result. Indeed, following Barber's polite decline of Curry's request, it appears that no other composers were solicited to write a piece for the band in the early 1950s. To be certain, besides the new symphony by Hindemith, The United States Army Band premiered no other significant new works for the *Freedom Sings* concerts. Nevertheless, Hindemith's *Symphony in B flat* remains one of the great masterpieces in the wind band repertoire. Moreover, written for and dedicated to Captain Hugh J. Curry and The United States Army Band, its composition and premiere is one of the musical highlights in the history of the organization.

Prelude to Taps

One of Captain Mitchell's first duties as an officer was as music director for a new military tattoo entitled *Prelude to Taps*. Developed in 1960 by Mitchell and Colonel Richard Lee, Commander of the 3rd Infantry, *Prelude to Taps* was a collaborative effort between the band and the 3rd Infantry (The Old Guard). Mitchell wrote the entire musical