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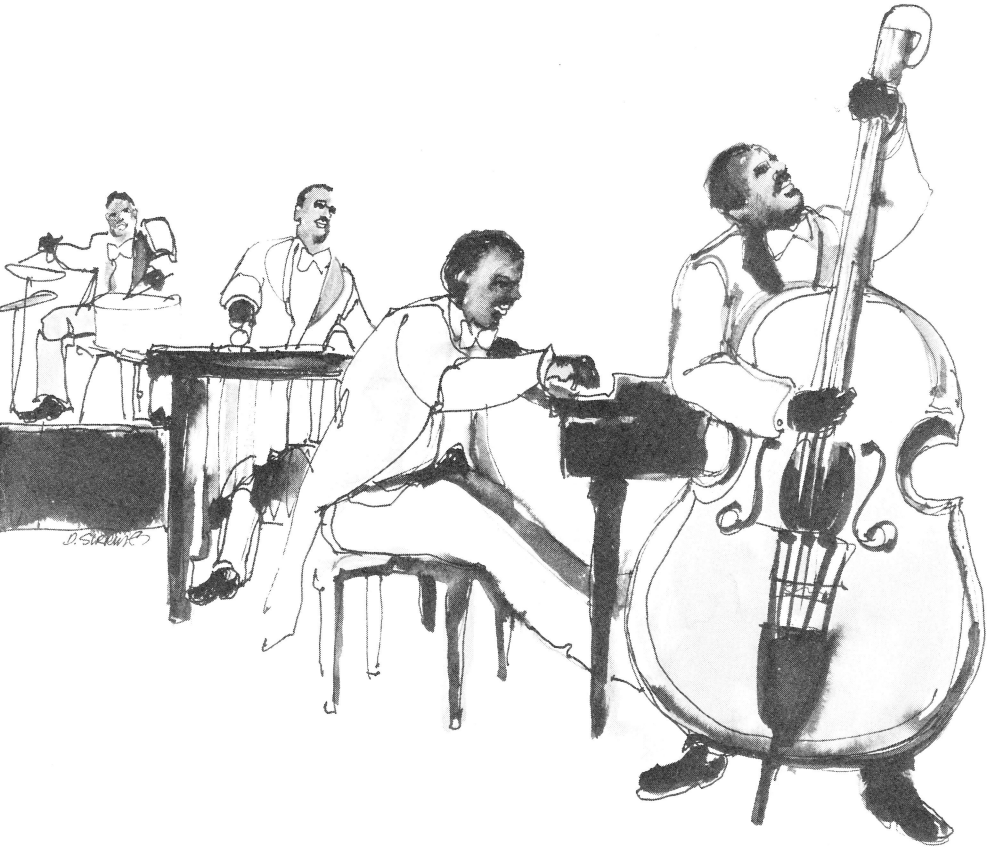

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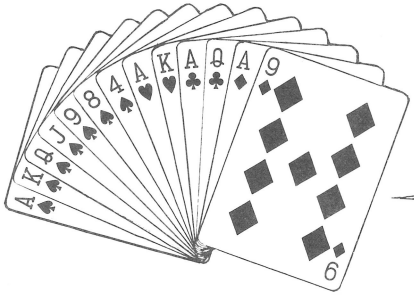

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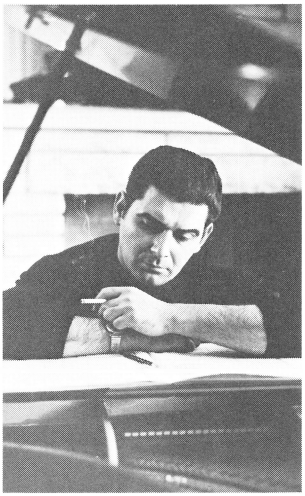

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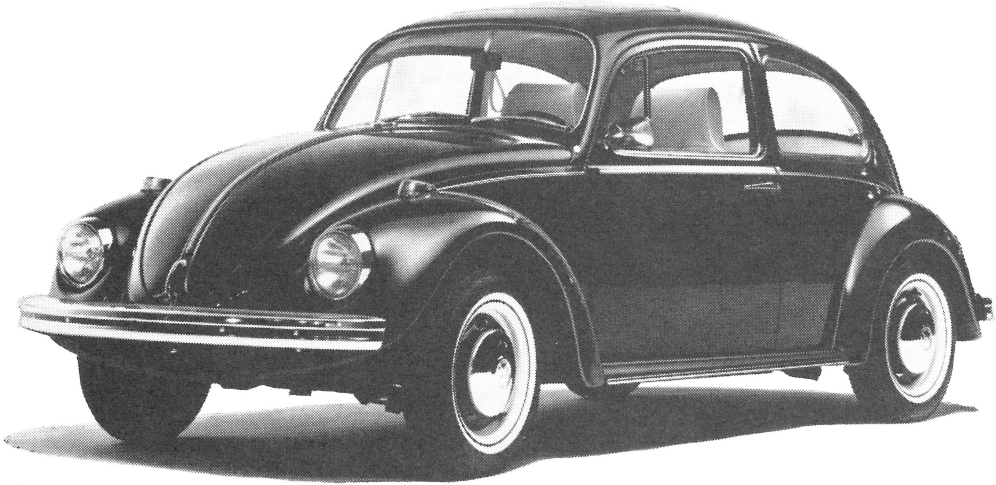

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Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra
Program

Second Concert, Friday
November 10, at 8:30 o'clock

Conductor, CARL KARAPETIAN
Soloist, MODERN JAZZ QUARTET

BRAHMS ..... Academic Festival Overture, Opus 80

MOZART ..... Symphony No. 29 in A Major, K.201

Allegro moderato
Andante
Menuetto
Allegro con spirito

(Intermission)

LEWIS ..... The Spiritual

LEWIS ..... Jazz Ostinato

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET
John Lewis, Milt Jackson,
Percy Heath, Connie Kay

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The Grand Rapids Federation of Musicians has cooperated in the presentation of this concert.

The Next Concert

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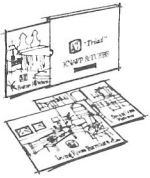

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Program Notes

By GERALD A. ELLIOTT

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-97)

Academic Festival Overature, Opus 80

The *Academic Festival Overture* was written – apparently with some reluctance – for the University of Breslau in recognition of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy it had conferred on Brahms in March, 1879. More than a year elapsed before Brahms started work on the overture(the good professors of Breslau would have preferred a symphony) and it was not until January 4, 1881, at Breslau, that it was performed. On the same program was Brahms' *Tragic Overture,* composed as a companion piece.

Brahms' description of the *Academic Festival Overture* as a "very jolly potpourri on students' songs" is apt only in that its thematic material is almost exclusively derived from the songs which were the common property of students all over Germany. But it is a little too sober, too solid, to fit the word "jolly." The conscious attempt to give the music a light, humorous touch is most evident in the handling of a Freshman song, which Brahms wrote for two bassoons.

The overture opens directly with the violins playing what Sir Donald Tovey has identified as "a student song intimately associated with beer mugs." Some connecting material then introduces another song with the somewhat cumbersome title of "We had built a stately house and trusted in God therein through bad weather, storm and horror." This in turn is followed by a section which derives from the first theme and is heard in the full orchestra. Then another song, "The Father of His Country," appears and leads directly to the aforementioned "Freshman Song." All of this material is worked over before the overture is brought to a conclusion with a song familiar the world over, the "Gaudeamus Igitur."

W. A. MOZART (1756-91)

Symphony No. 29 in A Major, K.201

Mozart's Symphony No. 29 was composed in the early part of 1774, in Salzburg. The previous year he had made his third trip to Milan, this one with his father, Leopold. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as he now referred to himself, was 17 when he returned to Salzburg. He was to remain in the Austrian city, with his family, for four years. In a way it is unfortunate that he did stay at home so long, for all of the rest of the family were also at home, and hence there were no letters passing among them. Most of what we know about the young Mozart we know from his letters and those of his father and sister. Since there were virtually no letters between 1773 and 1777, we know almost nothing about Mozart's life in this period.

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He did, however, leave an astonishing music record in a long list of compositions he wrote in those four years. In the 14 months between October, 1773 and December, 1774, he composed four symphonies (including the A Major, K.201) the concerto for bassoon, the concerto in D for piano and orchestra (K.175), the four-hand piano sonata in B flat (K.358), five piano sonatas, the serenade in D (K.203), the Litaniae Lauretaniae in D, the Missa Brevis in F and the Missa Bevis in D, and a substantial quantity of other music for voice and varied instruments.

Of the symphonies stemming from this period the most famous is the G minor (K.183) which usually is identified as the "little G minor." The A major (K.201) has been described as "genial and bright," and indeed all four of its movements are cheerful, though the second movement is tinged with that sweet sadness that characterized so many of Mozart's slow movements.

The A major symphony is conventional in form. The first movement is based on three distinct themes and the second movement on the usual two. The third movement, a minuet, also is based on two themes, as is the fourth movement, which is in 6/8 time.

JOHN LEWIS (1920-)

The Spiritual and Jazz Ostinato

Both of these works, for jazz quartet and symphony orchestra, were composed by John Lewis, pianist and founder of the Modern Jazz Quartet. *The Spiritual* is based on one of the most famous of all spirituals, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." *Jazz Ostinato* is based on an original theme by Lewis. The Quartet has performed both works several times with some

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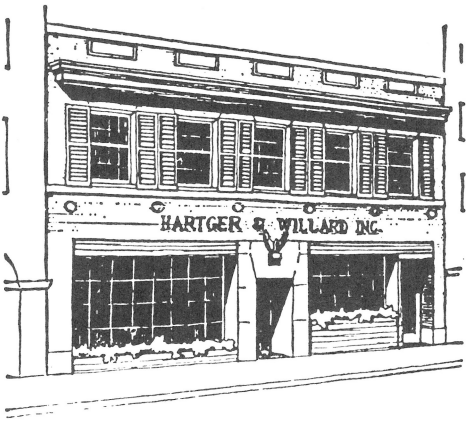

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of the country's leading symphony orchestras. It also has performed with symphony orchestras similar works by the Yugoslavian bassist, Miljenko Prohaska, and William O. Smith.

Writing of the two Lewis compositions to be heard on this program, Winthrop Sargeant, music critic for the New Yorker magazine, remarked earlier this year that they "showed a skilled musical mind at work." Sargeant observed that he always had thought that mixing a jazz group with a symphony was "like an attempt to combine two different languages" but, he added, "if anybody can combine the two languages successfully, John Lewis is the man to do it."

Whitney Balliett, the New Yorker's jazz critic, has noted that Lewis has "pointed the way toward the use of classical forms – the fugue, rondo and episode – while maintaining, through some memorable improvisations and a frequent use of the blues, direct contact with the fundamentals of jazz."

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Lewis was born in La Grange, Ill., and was reared in Albuquerque, N. M. He studied music and anthropology at the University of New Mexico but in his twenties decided to make music his career and went to New York to study at the Manhattan School of Music. In New York he soon became identified with some of the most influential voices in contemporary jazz, those of Miles Davis and Charlie (Bird) Parker as a member of their quartet, and of Dizzy Gillespie. Meanwhile he was not neglecting his studies. He earned two degrees at the Manhattan school. Later he taught piano and theory there.

Lewis formed the Modern Jazz Quartet in 1952 with Milt Jackson and Percy Heath. Jackson, who plays the vibraharp, and Heath, who plays stringed bass, still are with the Quartet. Its fourth member, the percussionist, is Connie Kay.

Lewis is the composer of several scores for the films, including that for Harry Belafonte's "Odds Against Tomorrow," a ballet, "Original Sin," and incidental music for William Inge's play, "Natural Affection." A founder, with other members of the Quartet, of the School of Jazz in Lenox, Mass., Lewis now is a member of the board of trustees of the Manhattan School of Music and, when his schedule permits, musical director of the Monterey Jazz Festival.

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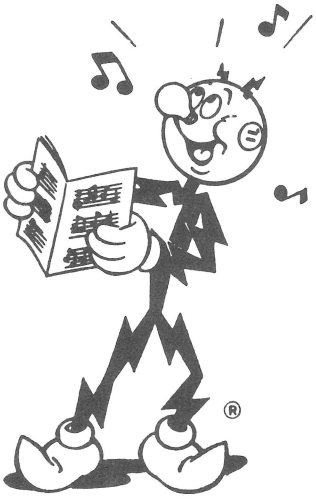

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Tonight's Soloists

John Lewis, second from the right, composed the two selections to be played on this evening's program by the Modern Jazz Quartet which he founded along with Milt Jackson, left, and Percy Heath, second from left, in 1952. The fourth member of the group is Connie Kay, right. Among the recent appearances of the Quartet have been performances with the Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Kalamazoo, Springfield, Genoa and Tokyo Symphony Orchestras.

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The Women's Committee

Project plans of the Women's Committee for the Grand Rapids Symphony were made known at the second membership meeting of the season yesterday afternoon at the home of Mrs. John M. Bissell.

Mrs. Hudson White, Jr., and Mrs. Gerald A. Hein, chairmen of the 1967-68 Young Peoples Saturday Series announced the dates and programs of the three-concert series. They will be presented December 16, March 2 and April 27 at 1:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center of Knollcrest Campus of Calvin College. For details please see advertisement page 14.

The Committee again will sponsor a contest in January to select a soloist to appear with the Youth Symphony on the March 2 program. Contestants are to prepare the first movement of Beethoven's *First Piano Concerto in C Major, Opus 15.* Further information can be obtained by calling Mrs. George L. McCargar, Jr., 949-1274.

An art contest is to be sponsored by the Women's Committee to select a design for the program cover for the Young People's Series. The winning entry will be announced at the Symphony's December 15 concert at which time it will be featured on the cover of the program.

The Women's Committee is organized to promote the growth of the Orchestra and to further intelligent appreciation and understanding of music, with emphasis on symphonic music.

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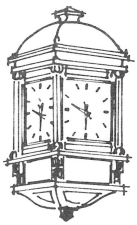

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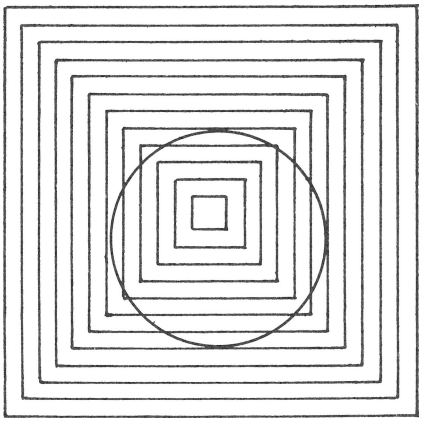

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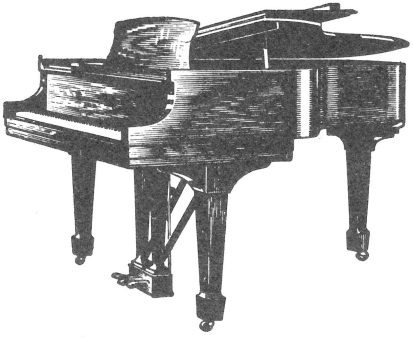

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