

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 - Saxophone 1 (E♭ Alto, B♭ Soprano)	1 - Trombone 1
1 - Piano Solo - PS0165 (included with score)	1 - Saxophone 2 (E♭ Alto, B♭ Soprano)	1 - Trombone 2
1 - C Flute 1	1 - Saxophone 3 (B♭ Tenor, B♭ Soprano)	1 - Tuba
1 - C Flute 2/Piccolo	1 - Saxophone 4 (E♭ Baritone)	1 - String Bass
1 - Oboe	1 - Horn in F 1	1 - Banjo
1 - Bassoon	1 - Horn in F 2	1 - Trap Set (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Gong, Bells)
1 - B♭ Clarinet 1	1 - B♭ Trumpet 1	1 - Timpani
1 - B♭ Clarinet 2	1 - B♭ Trumpet 2	1 - Piano/Celeste
1 - B♭ Bass Clarinet		

# DONALD HUNSBERGER

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, DGG, Phillips, Mercury and Decca among others and has led the Ensemble on numerous highly acclaimed concert tours, including six to Japan and one, with Wynton 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 CBDNA and as a Board member of CBDNA, 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 concerts featuring such classic silent masterpieces as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Mark of Zorro*, *City Lights*, *Potemkin*, *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 accompaniments to George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, each drawn from authentic original resources and manuscripts. Thomas Verrier wrote his concert band/wind ensemble version (DH9804B) based upon research of Gershwin's personal scores now housed in the Library of Congress. Allan McMurray and the University of Colorado Wind Ensemble performed it at 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 two earliest Ferde Grofé settings - the original Paul Whiteman Band version (1924) and the subsequent theatre orchestra publication (1926) (DH9804). I was searching to create a lean, 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 accompaniments will further enrich the wind band's 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 orchestra and its repertoire, as this was the primary extant repertoire utilized by local orchestra directors 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, harmonium and percussion; and the small orchestra: flute, 1 clarinet, 2 trumpets (cornets) and trombone, plus strings, keyboard and percussion. Grofé used a version of 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

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## 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 Named. Committee Will Decide ‘What Is American Music.’” According to the advertisement (purely a media ploy), 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.” Busy with his show *Sweet 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 accompaniment. 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 slur; however, Ross Gorman (Whiteman’s lead reed player) improvised the signature clarinet “wail.” According to contemporary reviews, the concert was rather dull, but *Rhapsody in Blue* was received enthusiastically by the audience, which included Jascha Heifetz, Victor Herbert, 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 made changes in 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 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 orchestra changed. More than ninety parts exist for the various instrumental combinations Whiteman had at any given time. 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 1924 score was never performed as written, even at the premiere. Gershwin most assuredly improvised sections of the piano cadenza, and the written ensemble accompaniment evolved through the five days of rehearsals. Grofé was a gifted arranger (later teaching orchestration at Juilliard) who commonly reduced existing orchestral scores for Whiteman’s unique instrumentation. (In 1927 he adapted Gershwin’s own scoring of *Concerto in F* for a Whiteman Band recording.)

As noted above, Grofé scored *Rhapsody in Blue* for concert band in 1928; however, this setting was flawed and somewhat unusable without considerable alteration. The primary problem lay in the absence of the solo piano! Grofé distributed the material contained in the solo piano part among various voices of the ensemble. Eventually, an erratum was created and made available with the score indicating cuts and deletions in the band version to adapt for the addition of the original solo piano part. Also, unlike the scoring of the symphony orchestra version in which chord tones were characteristically assigned to specific players or sections, these chord tones were voiced within individual sections, and thus no distinct timbre was afforded each.

The shortcomings of this extant concert band version have led to the creation of the current modern edition, which may be performed by either concert band or wind ensemble (most effectively by the latter). The present edition preserves characteristic timbres and transparent qualities of the orchestral setting while texturally capturing—despite the absence of strings—its innate vertical densities. Gershwin’s personal copy of Grofé’s symphony orchestra score (housed in the Library of Congress) has been used as a primary research source. Select string 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).

Dedicated to Paul Whiteman

# RHAPSODY IN BLUE™

CONDUCTOR

Setting for Piano and Wind Ensemble

GEORGE GERSHWIN  
Arranged from 1924 and  
1926 Grofé orchestrations by  
DONALD HUNSBERGER

Molto moderato

4/4

Solo Piano

1st C Flute

2nd C Flute/  
Piccolo

Oboe

Bassoon

1st Bb Clarinet

2nd Bb Clarinet

Bb Bass Clarinet

Saxophone 1  
(Eb Alto,  
Bb Soprano)

Saxophone 2  
(Eb Alto,  
Bb Soprano)

Saxophone 3  
(Bb Tenor,  
Bb Soprano)

Saxophone 4  
(Eb Baritone)

Solo *p* gliss. *mf*

Molto moderato

4/4

1st Horn in F

2nd Horn in F

1st Bb Trumpet

2nd Bb Trumpet

1st Trombone

2nd Trombone

Tuba

String Bass

Banjo

Trap Set  
(Snare Drum, Bass  
Drum, Cymbals,  
Gong, Bells,  
Triangle)

Timpani

*p* *pp*

Molto moderato

4/4

Piano/Celeste

*pp*

1 2 3 4

DH9804C

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Conductor - 2

Solo Pno.

1 Fls.

2 Picc.

Ob.

Bsn.

1 Cls.

2 Cls.

B. Cl.

Sax. 1 (Alto)

Sax. 2 (Alto)

Sax. 3 (Tenor)

Sax. 4 (Bari.)

1 Hns.

2 Hns.

1 Tpts.

2 Tpts.

1 Tpbs. St. mute p Open

2 Tpbs. St. mute p Open

Tuba p

St. B.

Banjo

Traps Bass Drum w/ Timp. Stick p

Timp.

Pno./Cel.

5 6 7 8 9 10