

RHAPSODY IN BLUE G.U.S. BAND

Side 1

1. **WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN** (2:47)
Traditional arr. Gordon Langford
2. **SARABANDE EN BLEU** (5:52)
Gordon Langford - Don Lusher, Trombone
3. **SAINT LOUIS BLUES** (3:24)
W. C. Handy arr. Bill Geldard
4. **I LOVES YOU, PORGY** (3:30)
George Gershwin arr. Bill Geldard - Don Lusher, Trombone
5. **THREE SONGS OF THE SOUTH** (8:42)
arr. Gordon Langford
Deep River
Go Down Moses
Carry Me Back To Old Virginny

Side 2

1. **DL BLUES** (3:18)
Don Lusher - Don Lusher, Trombone
2. **BLUES IN THE NIGHT** (3:40)
Arlen-Mercer arr. Bill Geldard
3. **NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN** (5:02)
Traditional arr. Gordon Langford - Don Lusher, Trombone
4. **RHAPSODY IN BLUE** (15:37)
George Gershwin arr. Keith Wilkinson - Frank Wibaut, Piano

The musical expression of the Negro slaves in the American South during the years preceding the American Civil War has had a profound effect on many types of music. This influence is most strongly felt in the subsequent development of the Blues.

The music of the African immigrants reflects a variety of influences. The strong rhythms which were brought from their homeland made for music which could be performed while the slaves were carrying out their repetitive tasks on the plantation, at the docks or in the factory. There was a melodic freedom stemming from the fact that it was to be several years before their songs were written down. Indeed many of these songs had very free solo verses answered by choruses in which everyone joined. The intolerable conditions in which they worked and lived gave their music a strange mixture of melancholy and optimism - a belief that their lot would improve which was often expressed in religious terms.

In the early years of the nineteenth century more people became aware of the music of these Negroes and several groups of minstrels - white artists who blacked their faces and performed these new-found songs - toured throughout America and later made their mark in Europe. As the popularity of this entertainment increased, several imitations of the original were written, the most prolific composer of such songs being Stephen Foster (1826-1864).

The end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery gave the Negroes more freedom to move around and make their own kind of music and the last decades of the nineteenth century saw the birth of the Blues - a musical form which still had much of the rhythmic, melodic and atmospheric content of the negro songs but had now lost many of the religious connotations. The Negro dance-band conductor and composer W. C. Handy (1873-1958) is credited with writing the first published composition in this form - his *Memphis Blues* - which appeared in 1910. This and the *Saint Louis Blues* which followed two years later have earned him the title "Father of the Blues". From that time right up to the present day many hundreds of composers have made use of the idiom and style of the Blues in their works.

Our programme for this record features music from all periods of this musical tradition ranging from the Negro Spirituals *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*, *Deep River* and *Go Down Moses* (the latter two being contained in "Three Songs From the South" which also includes *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny* written in 1878 by James Bland (1854-1911) for a touring troupe of Minstrels) to the very recent *DL Blues* and *Sarabande en Bleu*.

We include two contributions from the pen of George Gershwin (1898-1937). His *Rhapsody in Blue*, an extended work employing many of the popular Blues idioms, was written for the famous Paul Whiteman Band who gave the first performance in New York in 1924. The negro folk-opera *Porgy and Bess* was Gershwin's last composition. It was first produced in Boston in 1935 and contains many of Gershwin's best-loved songs including *Bess You Is My Woman Now*, *I Got Plenty o' Nothing*, *It Ain't Necessarily So* and *Summertime*. *I Loves You, Porgy* comes from the moment in the second act when the flirtatious Bess confesses her love for the crippled beggar Porgy.

Most of the musical arrangements were prepared specially for this recording. **Gordon Langford** has had wide experience in the world of light music as pianist, trombonist, conductor, composer and arranger and is especially well-known for his deep involvement with brass bands. This record features his work both as arranger and composer. **Bill Geldard** had much of his early musical experience playing trombone in brass bands in the north-east of England and following national service became a free-lance "session" player in London. He has played with and arranged for many famous orchestras and bands and has recently provided many fine arrangements for brass band including a number for his friend and colleague Don Lusher. **Keith Wilkinson**, the musical director of the G.U.S. Band, has provided the arrangement of *Rhapsody in Blue*.

DON LUSHER has appeared as guest soloist with brass bands on several occasions and the G.U.S. Band welcomed this opportunity to play with him again. He has played with many famous bands including the Squadronaires and the Ted Heath Band and now concentrates on studio work. We are pleased to include his own characteristic *DL Blues* which had previously been featured by his own Don Lusher Big Band.

This record marks the debut of **FRANK WIBAUT** as a performer with a brass band. He studied with Cyril Smith at the Royal College of Music and his performances have won many first prizes. In 1982 in addition to many concerts, recitals and masterclasses in Britain and Europe he is due to perform in Australia and Mexico.

While the brass band movement cannot claim to have its roots in slavery its early development is closely allied to the industrial scene of the mid-nineteenth century. Many of the bands were formed to provide an opportunity for the factory workers to enjoy their relaxation by making music together. So it is appropriate that a brass band should be chosen to perform this music which has its origins so firmly set among working people.

Even though it was not founded until 1933 the **G.U.S. BAND** also started life as a works band, that of Munn and Felton's shoe factory. Since the acquisition of Munn and Felton's by the Great Universal Stores in 1962 the band has enjoyed the support of that group of companies and gratefully acknowledges in particular the services of Great Universal Mail Order, Cavendish Woodhouse, Global Travel, Art Wallpaper and Just Pants Plus.

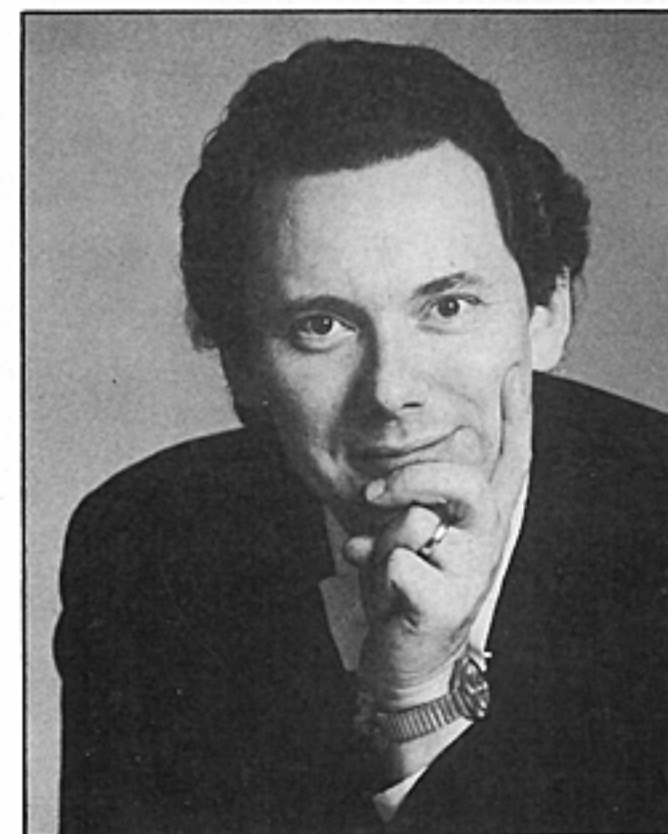
Keith Wilkinson



Conductor KEITH WILKINSON



DON LUSHER Trombone



FRANK WIBAUT Piano