

## Armando Ghitalla: A Trumpet Legacy

**Armando Ghitalla, Trumpet**

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra • Cappella Istropolitana\*

**William Perry, Conductor**

### Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra (14:03)

1. *Jazz Promenade. Allegro giocoso* 5:08
2. *Ballad. Adagio cantabile* 4:21
3. *Carnival! Con Rio Brio* 4:34

William Perry  
(b.1930)

4. **Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra in F Major** (14:29) Amilcare Ponchielli  
*In One Movement (Allegro risoluto – Andante cantabile – Allegro –  
Theme and variations I, II, III – Finale, Allegro brillante)* (1834-1886)

### Concerto for Trumpet and String Orchestra\* (10:23)

5. *Allegro moderato* 4:27
6. *Andante* 4:08
7. *Allegro giocoso* 1:48

Johann Melchior Molter  
(1696-1765)

### Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra, Op. 18 (15:49)

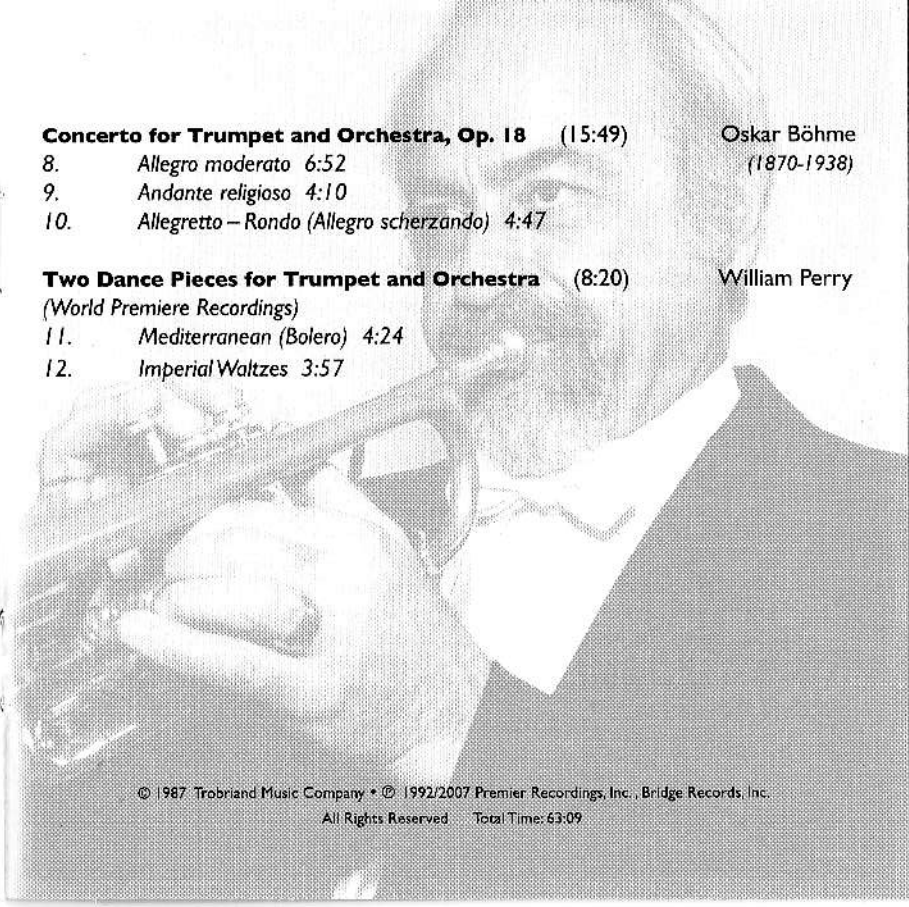
8. *Allegro moderato* 6:52
9. *Andante religioso* 4:10
10. *Allegretto – Rondo (Allegro scherzando)* 4:47

Oskar Böhme  
(1870-1938)

### Two Dance Pieces for Trumpet and Orchestra (8:20) (World Premiere Recordings)

11. *Mediterranean (Bolero)* 4:24
12. *Imperial Waltzes* 3:57

William Perry



### ARMANDO GHITALLA (1925 – 2001)

This compilation disc is a tribute to Armando Ghitalla, one of the outstanding classical trumpet performers of our time and considered among the finest teachers of the instrument in the latter decades of the Twentieth Century. His recordings are testament to his technical prowess and keen musicianship, and the number of his students who now hold principal positions in major orchestras provides ample evidence of his ability to train effectively and encourage the highest standards of trumpet playing.

These are Armando Ghitalla's final studio recordings, and it is appropriate that the pieces represent music that he most enjoyed performing during his long and distinguished career. The *Böhme Concerto* shows his affection for the rich tradition of romantic playing. The *Molter Concerto* attests to his long association with Baroque trumpet works. His delight at discovering and reconstructing an Italian work originally written for band, the *Concerto* by Ponchielli, reflects his second-generation Italian ancestry and his early career as a cornet soloist. The *William Perry Concerto* was written specifically for him, only one of a number of new works which he premiered and championed. The *Two Dance Pieces* that conclude the program, also by Perry, and here being issued for the first time, demonstrate Ghitalla's clear virtuosity in the *Imperial Waltzes* and his unparalleled gift for lyric phrasing in the bolero called *Mediterranean*.

Armando Ghitalla was born in Alpha, Illinois and raised nearby in Knoxville, Illinois. After studying the cornet locally, he attended Illinois Wesleyan University, where he was later to receive an honorary doctorate. He was in the Navy for three years and then used the GI Bill to enroll in New York's Juilliard School of Music as a student of the legendary trumpeter William Vacchiano, who taught there for 67 years.

While at Juilliard, Ghitalla was hired as first trumpet of the City Center Opera and Ballet Orchestra and shortly thereafter, in 1949, was engaged as principal trumpet of the Houston Symphony. Record collectors still prize the recording he made at that time of the Scriabin *Poem of Ecstasy* conducted by Leopold Stokowski. In 1951, Ghitalla joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra, becoming principal trumpet in 1964. He also was first trumpet with the Boston "Pops" for 13 years and had a flourishing solo career. He played recitals in Town Hall and Carnegie Recital Hall in New York and concerts throughout the United States and abroad. His recordings gained international recognition, and in 1963, with Pierre Monteux conducting, he made the first-ever recording of the Hummel *Trumpet Concerto in E*.

In 1979, Ghitalla retired from the Boston Symphony to pursue teaching young players on a full-time basis. He was a professor at the University of Michigan for 14 years and then assumed a similar post at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he taught until his death in 2001. Throughout his teaching life, he maintained close ties with the Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts where many of his students were first introduced

to and influenced by his remarkable artistry.

Of course, artistry can take many forms, and Armando Ghitalla was also recognized as a first-rate chef, an accomplished carpenter, and perhaps most particularly, as a caricaturist whose amusing drawings of his colleagues and himself were always in high demand at Boston Symphony fund-raising events. When PBS wanted a set of opening credits illustrating famous poems for its popular *Anyone for Tennyson?* television series, Ghitalla responded with a 20 foot-long scroll presenting his own stylized depictions of "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Canterbury Tales" and other classics. Once asked what it was like to record trumpet concertos from three different centuries, he quickly sketched three Ghitallas in period costume, each with its appropriate trumpet.

Throughout his life, Armando Ghitalla was a student of trumpet-manufacturing, constantly testing and supervising the construction of specialized instruments. His first instrument in Illinois was a Holten cornet, and he hoped one day to play with the Goldman Band. When he entered Juilliard and discovered the joys of orchestral playing, he concentrated on trumpet studies and played instruments manufactured by Vincent Bach. In his later Boston Symphony days, he formed an association with Yamaha, who thereafter made many special trumpets to Ghitalla's designs.

In this present recording, Ghitalla uses a variety of trumpets: a B Flat trumpet for the Ponchielli and Böhme *Concertos*, a Trumpet in C plus a Flügelhorn

for the Perry *Concerto*, a Piccolo Trumpet for the Molter, and a rare Trumpet in E Flat for the *Imperial Waltzes*.

As we listen to these recordings, the technical skills that originated in his cornet days are readily apparent, but it is the golden melodic gift and the rare sense of expressivity that set him apart. The Armando Ghitalla sound is unique.



**PERRY:**

## CONCERTO FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA

William Perry (1930 - ) was born in Elmira, New York, which was also the birthplace of Charles Tomlinson Griffes. During his teen-age years, Perry actively composed and conducted and while attending Harvard University carried on his musical studies with Paul Hindemith, Walter Piston and Randall Thompson. In addition to concert works, he has written extensively for film and television and for twelve years was Music Director at the Museum of Modern Art in New York where he composed and performed as a pianist more than 300 scores for the Museum's silent film collection. His subsequent television series, *The Silent Years*, starring Orson Welles and Lillian Gish, won an Emmy Award. He composed all the scores for the Peabody Award-winning *Mark Twain Series* on PBS.

His *Trumpet Concerto* was written in 1985 and dedicated to Armando Ghitalla. Thoroughly American in its style and content, its three movements are built around different elements of popular music. The first, entitled *Jazz Promenade*, presents a main theme built on intervals of a fourth which leads to a broad melody for trumpet and strings. For the second movement, *Ballad*, the solo instrument becomes a flügelhorn, which soars lyrically over a soft rock accompaniment of guitar, harp, bongos and triangle. In the final movement, entitled *Carnival!* and marked *Con Rio Brio*, the Latin rhythms of the rumba are established by a large percussion section over which the solo trumpet and xylophone often duel for supremacy. The closing bars combine the major themes of the second and third movements.

**PONCHIELLI:**

## CONCERTO FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA IN F MAJOR

Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-1886) is best known as a composer of operas, of which he wrote a dozen, his most celebrated being *La Gioconda*, which was first performed at La Scala in 1876. In later years he also became a professor of composition at the Milan Conservatory, where among his pupils were Puccini and Mascagni. But, at an early period of his life, he earned his living as a conductor of municipal bands in Piacenza and Cremona, and the *Concerto in F Major* was written in 1866 for just such an ensemble. It has occasionally been performed since by concert bands, but it has also been effectively rescored for a traditional Italian operatic orchestra by composer Peter Breiner, and in this version it was given its concert premiere by Armando Ghitalla in 1986. It was subsequently performed by Ghitalla in numerous concert performances throughout the world. The *Concerto*, with its cantabile melodies, sprightly rhythms and florid cadenzas, is written in one movement, the main part of which is built around a theme with three variations leading to a brilliant finale.

**MOLTER:**

## CONCERTO FOR TRUMPET AND STRING ORCHESTRA

Johann Melchior Molter (1696-1765) was a prolific Baroque composer whose works are only now becoming more widely known. He was born in Tiefenort near Eisenach, Germany and spent most of his life as Kapellmeister at various courts, particularly in Karlsruhe where his manuscripts remain



today. Several trips to Italy (1719-21 and 1737) brought him into contact with the music and perhaps actual acquaintance with Antonio Vivaldi, Tommaso Albinoni and Alessandro Scarlatti. Their influence can be observed in his stylistic development from the late Baroque to the "galant" style. He wrote for a large variety of instruments and enjoyed exploring sonorities and unusual instrumental combinations. Of his numerous concertos, at least eight were written for one or more trumpets. The *Concerto* heard in this recording, however, dating from around 1750, was originally written for clarinet in D and transcribed later for piccolo trumpet by J. Langendoen. The three-movement fast-slow-fast structure follows the Italian form established by Vivaldi.

#### **BÖHME: CONCERTO FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 18**

Oskar Böhme (1870-1938), the son of a Dresden trumpeter, attended the Leipzig Conservatory of Music, spent two years in the opera orchestra in Budapest and then immigrated to Saint Petersburg and spent the rest of his life in Russia. He served as principal trumpet at the Mariinsky Theatre from 1903 to 1924 but was also well-regarded as a solo cornetist. He held various teaching and performing posts in what had become known as Leningrad until, following the assassination of a Stalin associate named Kirov (for whom the Mariinsky changed its name), a number of artists and musicians were banished to remote areas. Böhme was sent to Chkalov (Orenburg) in the Ural Mountains where he reportedly died in 1938.

Among his numerous compositions for trumpet or cornet, the *Concerto, Op.*

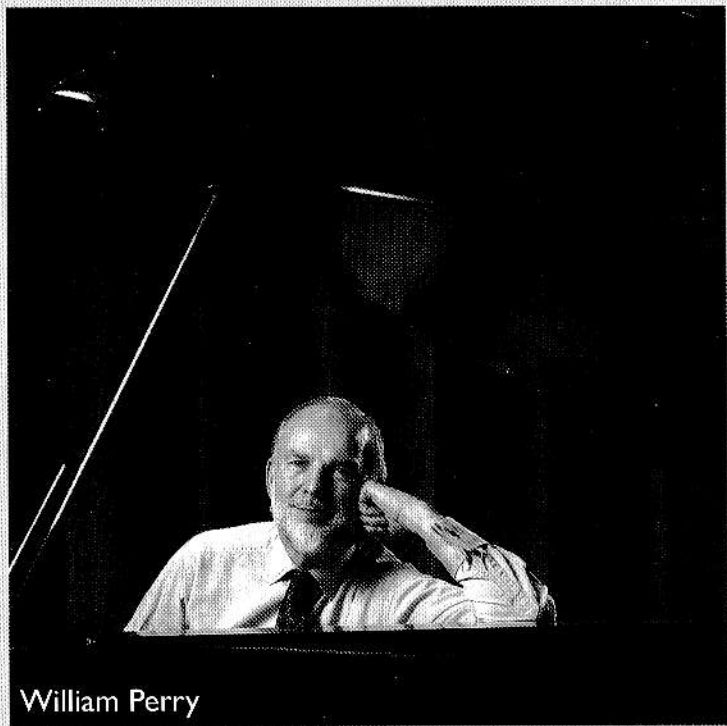
18 is particularly fine. With its long melodic lines and virtuoso passages, it stands as the only authentic trumpet concerto of the Romantic period. It was published in 1899 in E minor for the now obsolete trumpet in A, but is today commonly performed in F minor on the modern B flat trumpet.

#### **PERRY: TWO DANCE PIECES FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA**

In 1986, William Perry was nominated for two Tony Awards for the music and lyrics to the Broadway musical, *Wind in the Willows*, starring Nathan Lane. While working on the score, he was struck with author Kenneth Grahame's beguiling description of the warm European Southland: "sun-bathed coasts, along which the white villas glittered against the olive woods ... purple islands of wine and spice, islands set low in languorous waters!" Out of this came the inspiration for the atmospheric bolero, "Mediterranean." The second dance piece, "Imperial Waltzes," is an evocation of an opulent ball in the days of Czarist Russia.

#### **SLOVAK PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

One of Europe's distinguished ensembles, the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1949 with the famed Vaclav Talich as its first permanent conductor. Over the years the orchestra's international fame has grown through its many critically-acclaimed recordings, its frequent appearances at major music festivals, and its numerous concert tours of Europe, North America and the Far East. The orchestra has performed under the baton of



William Perry



Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra

such notable conductors as Claudio Abbado, Leonard Slatkin, Oliver von Dohnanyi, Dean Dixon, Aldo Ceccato and many others.

### **CAPPELLA ISTROPOLITANA**

The chamber orchestra Cappella Istropolitana was founded in 1983. Made up of well-known soloists and principal players from the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra and originally designed to be primarily a recording orchestra, this fine ensemble now makes concert appearances throughout the world. While specializing in German and Italian works from the Baroque Period, the orchestra frequently programs 20th and 21st century compositions as well.

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**Engineer:** Gustav Soral  
**Mastering:** Joe Castellon  
**Program Notes:** Douglas Bruce  
**Graphic Design:** Douglas H. Holly

**Executive Producers:** Robert W. Stern (Premier Recordings, Inc.)  
David and Becky Starobin (Bridge Records, Inc.)

Caricatures by Armando Ghitalla

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**Photographs of Armando Ghitalla:**  
courtesy of the University of Michigan Photo Services

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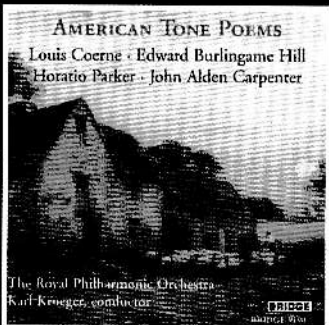
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