

READING MUSICAL FOUNDATION
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Jim Seidel

December 2005 - The Reading Musical Foundation has honored James S. Seidel, a 1969 graduate of Exeter High School and Chair of the Exeter District's Music Department, for three decades of excellence in teaching music and for his 25 years as conductor of the Ringgold Band by commissioning Robert Maggio to compose a work for concert band, "***Music in the Wings***." The substantial, one-movement concerto features Jim's principal instrument, the trumpet. Dr. Maggio is a member of the music faculty at West Chester University, from which Jim received a graduate degree soon after graduating from Mansfield State College, now Mansfield University.

The Ringgold Band will play the premier of ***Music in the Wings*** during its annual concert on Sunday, April 9, 2006 at 3 p.m., at the Scottish Rite Cathedral in West Reading. Kenneth Laudermilch, Jim's trumpet teacher at West Chester and a colleague of Robert Maggio, will perform the trumpet solo.

Exeter's gifted music faculty has inspired many of the District's graduates to pursue careers in music. Jim volunteers with the Music Educators of Berks County to produce annual county band, orchestra and chorus festivals, in which he participated while a student at Exeter High School. As conductor of the Ringgold Band, Jim has encouraged talented high school musicians to rehearse and perform with the Band, fortifying the ensemble, preserving the rich literature of the concert band, and exposing student musicians to the timeless benefits of participatory musical experience and to the diversity among those who enjoy it. Few members of the Ringgold Band are performing musicians by occupation.

Described by the Philadelphia Inquirer as "smart, vital, and inventive" and by the American Record Guide as "lyrical, passionate, melodic, and rhythmically charged," Robert Maggio's works have been performed by the Atlanta Symphony, Boston Pops, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra and other orchestras. He has composed in nearly every genre, including theatre, and for full and chamber orchestra, concert band and a variety of vocal ensembles. He is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania.

An anonymous gift to the Reading Musical Foundation in November, 2004 enabled the Foundation's commission of ***Music in the Wings***. The composition was completed last summer. To personalize it and commend Jim, Dr. Maggio chose Exeter's *alma mater* melody, the same today as when Jim graduated from Exeter High School, as a point of departure. In the composer's words:

"To honor Jim Seidel through music, ***Music in the Wings*** is scored for solo trumpet (Jim's instrument) and band; the trumpet part was written specifically for Jim's trumpet teacher and my colleague, Kenneth Laudermilch, professor of music at West Chester University. The title comes from the symbolic movement of key performers over the course of the work: the soloist plays the entire introduction offstage, calling out to the trumpet section on stage. The main body of the work is played with everyone on stage; then, the extended coda features three offstage trumpets calling out to the soloist on stage. This movement was intended to suggest the psychological and emotional dynamics of several important relationships (teacher/student, conductor/ensemble, parent/child). To deepen the connection to Jim's life in music and education, the *alma mater* of Jim's High School (Exeter) is quoted and varied in numerous guises in the introduction, coda and the development section. For those who are analytically oriented, ***Music in the Wings*** follows a first movement concerto form, with the musical themes stated first in the full ensemble, then picked up by the soloist (Exposition). These themes are varied and explored, and new ones are introduced (Development) before they are returned to, transformed (Recapitulation)."

In continuous operation since 1852, the Ringgold Band is one of the nation's oldest concert bands. Most of them long-tenured, its conductors have included Reading's "March King," Monroe A. Althouse, and Jim's trumpet teacher during high school, Walter Gier, who chose Jim to be his successor as conductor of the Ringgold Band. In Reading

to appear as the Ringgold Band's guest conductor for its 80th Anniversary Concert, John Philip Sousa died on March 6, 1932, hours after concluding a rehearsal of the Ringgold Band with his signature and our nation's official march, ***The Stars and Stripes Forever***.

The Reading Musical Foundation and the Ringgold Band together authored the following inscription in the conductor's score for ***Music in the Wings***:

"Music in the Wings was commissioned by the Reading Musical Foundation as a gift to the Ringgold Band, one of America's oldest concert bands, to honor James ("Jim") S. Seidel for his 25 years of distinguished leadership as the Band's music director, for his inspiration of youth in music and for his dedication to preserve and develop the literature of the concert band."

Music in the Wings is one of six efforts by the Reading Musical Foundation last year to honor gifted local music educators. Also recognized were Ann Cusano and Kim Webster (by scholarships for proficiency on oboe, English horn or bassoon), Don Hinkle (by scholarships to enable students to participate in the Berks Classical Children's Chorus), Peter Brye (by scholarships to provide summer music camp experiences and merit awards for cellists and harpists in middle school), and Will Rapp (by scholarships to provide summer music camp experiences and merit awards for percussionists in middle school).

Eighty years old next year, the Reading Musical Foundation supports music performance in Berks County, provides merit and need-based scholarships for music study to school-age county residents, and promotes the lifelong benefits of music education throughout Berks County with a variety of innovative programs.