

When the Verdehr Trio commissioned Broadway arranger William David Brohn to write a piece for them, (perhaps in a lighter or crossover mode), he chose to join hands with America's George Gershwin in the song *I Got Rhythm* which Gershwin composed (to his brother Ira's lyrics) in 1930 for the Broadway show *Girl Crazy*. In 1934, with his accustomed elan, Gershwin made this song into a brilliant set of variations for piano and orchestra which was first performed on a radio broadcast with the composer himself playing the piano. During the broadcast, Gershwin also spoke about the piece, and this fascinating archival record is available commercially today.

Proceeding from that 1930s score, it was quite natural for Brohn to forge a piece called *I Got Variations* (happily with full approval from the Gershwin Estate!). And *I Got Variations* is just that: a short set of Brohn's own variations which directly follow the introduction and statement of them from the original Gershwin. In the coda, Brohn revisits the Gershwin piece briefly again.

The world premiere of *I Got Variations* was on July 6, 1999 in the Verdehr Trio Summer Chamber Music Concert Series at the Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

William David Brohn (1933–2017) was born in Flint, Michigan. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1955 with a Bachelor of Music degree and in 1958 earned a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory. Subsequent studies took him to Tanglewood and Salzburg, Austria. In 1996, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Fine Art from Michigan State.

Brohn orchestrated scores for more than twenty Broadway shows, for numerous West End (London) productions, for the National Theatre, and for the Shakespeare Festival (Stratford-upon-Avon). Among these are *Miss Saigon*, *Oliver!*, *The Secret Garden*, *Crazy for You*, *Ragtime*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *Curtains*, *Wicked*, and the Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*. In 1987 he adapted Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* score for live presentation with the Eisenstein film, an adaptation that is played frequently by symphony orchestras. His orchestrations won a Tony Award in 1988 and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Orchestrations on three occasions.

Brohn provided arrangements for Liza Minnelli, Renee Fleming, James Galway, and Placido Domingo on CD and in concert. Later, he became something of a specialist in arranging repertory for so-called "crossover" artists, among them violinist Joshua Bell and sopranos Marilyn Horne and Kristin Chenoweth. Brohn arranged and orchestrated scores for the Boston Pops, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Indiana Symphony Orchestra, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and The New York Philharmonic. He collaborated with conductors such as Andre Previn, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart. Acclaim for Brohn's scores commissioned by the American Ballet Theater, New York City Ballet, Agnes de Mille, Twyla Tharp, and Christopher Wheeldon further broadened his achievements into the world of dance.