

PROGRAM NOTES

After a brief introduction using the main themes in fragments, we try to picture musically the mood of the United States just before the Civil War. We hear popular tunes of the mid-Nineteenth Century, LISTEN TO THE MOCKING BIRD, DIXIELAND (which was then a popular minstrel song), and DE CAMPTOWN RACES. From the distance comes the sound of drums and the strain of JOHN BROWN'S BODY, announcing the first signs of the coming conflict. Little whispers of DIXIE and THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM become intermingled, and then we hear the brilliant strains of the South's rallying song, MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND ("Oh Tannenbaum"). This gives way to the Union Hymn THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM, and suddenly we hear WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME as young Americans from both North and South were called from their homes to fight one another. Here the music becomes meditative, gradually dying out, as the soldier recalls many songs of his day, weaving through the sentimental melody JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE MOTHER.

The reverie is soon broken by the thunder of drums as we picture first the Northern armies on the move, MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA, then the Southern troops and THE YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS. With fragments of their favorite songs ringing in their ears, the two armies come closer and closer, the music building in intensity. Finally, in a shattering explosion, the war is on!

The war is a fleeting instant in the stream of history, and its noisy tumult soon dies away, giving birth to THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC. A Republic restored but not proud of its costly victory. Slowly the music builds in grandeur, representing the spiritual hope for a peaceful and prosperous *United* States of America that eventually becomes a reality, as the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln became a symbol of dedication for all Americans; the "government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."