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Winthrop University

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# Chicago Symphony Orchestra Percussionist Holds Concert April 6

## Quick Facts

- The Winthrop Percussion and Marimba Ensembles will play a concert with percussionist Gordon Peters on April 6.
- Peters has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for 42 years.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **Gordon Peters**, percussionist with the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** for 42 years and member of the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame, will join the Winthrop University Percussion and Marimba Ensembles in a concert devoted to his compositions and arrangements on Thursday, April 6, at 8 p.m. in [Barnes Recital Hall](#).

Until his retirement in 2001, **Peters** was principal percussionist and principal associate timpanist of the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**. In 1959, he was engaged for this position by the late Fritz Reiner, then Chicago's conductor. Also for the Chicago Symphony organization, Peters was conductor-administrator of the Chicago Civic Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist with the symphony and has sung with the Chicago Symphony Chorus. Peters performed under the batons of CSO Music Directors Fritz Reiner, Jean Martinon, Georg Solti and Daniel Barenboim, plus such gifted conductors as Pierre Monteux, Leonard Bernstein, Claudio Abbado, James Levine and Pierre Boulez.

Prior to joining the Chicago orchestra, he performed with the Grant Park Summer Symphony in Chicago, the Rochester (NY) Philharmonic Orchestra, the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the United States Military Academy Band at West Point.

**Peters** taught percussion at Northwestern University and at institutions in New York state. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., where he founded the Marimba Masters. This unique ensemble of seven players appeared several times with both the Rochester and Buffalo Philharmonic orchestras and played numerous professional engagements in New York state, including 11 radio/TV shows with Arthur Godfrey (1955) and Ed Sullivan (1958). Peters also studied conducting extensively with Pierre Monteux in Hancock, Maine, and received the coveted Monteux Discipleship Award in 1962.

The Marimba Masters' first performance was at a noontime recital on March 11, 1954. Since there was relatively little repertoire for marimba ensembles at that time, they played arrangements of popular classical pieces such as the overture from Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," the "Dance of the Comedians" from Smetana's "Bartered Bride," the Largo from Dvorak's "New World Symphony" and excerpts from "Carmen" by Bizet.

As a composer and arranger, Gordon Peters has published several marimba ensemble works, and his composition, "The Swords of Moda-Ling," has become the second most performed percussion ensemble work in the United States. His "Treatise on Percussion" (1962) exerted a notable influence on the course of percussion education during the years before the appearance of his book, "The Drummer: Man in 1975." In 1987, he completed a 22-year tenure as conductor and administrator of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago – the training orchestra of the Chicago Symphony – a post to which he was appointed by CSO music director Jean Martinon.

**Gordon Peters** served as the first national president of the Percussive Arts Society (1964 to 1967) and was a member of the board of directors of the Conductors' Guild. He received the Theodore

Thomas Distinguished Service Medallion at the time of his retirement from the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** in 2001. **Peters** was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame in 2004.

Some of the works to be performed by the Winthrop ensemble include Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," Kabalevsky's "Comedians Gallop," Johann Strauss' "Thunder and Lightning Polka," David Rose's "Holiday for Strings" and Peters' own composition "The Swords of Moda Ling."

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