

LORAS JOHN SCHISSEL

LORAS JOHN SCHISSEL is the music director and conductor of both the Virginia Grand Military Band, of which he is the founder, and the Cleveland Orchestra's Blossom Festival Band, two of the finest concert bands in the world. He has travelled throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia conducting orchestras, bands, and choral ensembles in a broad range of musical styles and varied programs.

A native of New Hampton, Iowa, Schissel studied brass instruments and conducting with Carlton Stewart, Frederick Fennell, and John Paynter. In the years following his studies at the University of Northern Iowa, he has distinguished himself as a prominent conductor, orchestrator, and musicologist.

Deeply committed to young musicians, he has appeared as conductor of all-state music festivals and of festival bands and orchestras in more than 30 states. As a composer and orchestrator, Schissel has created an extensive catalogue of over 500 works for orchestra, symphonic wind band, and jazz ensemble, all published exclusively by Ludwig/Masters Music. His musical score for Bill Moyers: America's First River, The Hudson that first appeared on PBS in April 2002, received extensive critical acclaim. He also created musical scores for two films for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Home in Hyde Park, New York. As a recording artist, Schissel has amassed a large discography with a wide variety of ensembles and various musical genres.

Schissel is a senior musicologist at the Library of Congress and a leading authority on the music of Percy Aldridge Grainger, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and former Boston Symphony Orchestra conductor Serge Koussevitzky. He co-authored The Complete Literary and Musical Works of John Philip Sousa and is currently co-authoring The Musical Works of Karl L. King with Gene Milford of the University of Akron. Schissel appeared in the award-winning PBS documentary If You Knew Sousa for the American Experience series, as well as Ben Wattenberg's Think Tank. He serves as a commentator on the Voice of America and for the

United States Information Service. In recognition of his world travels, he was inducted into the Circumnavigators Club of New York, in May 2002, and in 2005 he was elected to membership in the prestigious American Bandmasters Association. He is also an honorary conductor of the historic Ringgold Band — the last band conducted by John Philip Sousa.

Schissel made his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in May 2007, conducting three performances of an Education Concert titled Spirit of America. The same month, he also made his debut with the Phoenix Symphony, conducting a program entitled Gershwin Celebration, and returned there in May 2008 to conduct for sold out concerts. He made his third annual appearance in Phoenix in May 2010 conducting an All-American Memorial Day program. In July 2008, he made his debut with the United States Army Band (Pershing's Own) on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. In 2011 he led the Cleveland Orchestra in a 9/11 commemoration concert on Public Square in downtown Cleveland.

In 2013, at the request of the George and Ira Gershwin family, Loras John Schissel began work at the University of Michigan School of Music as a Board Member of the "Gershwin Editions" creating new authoritative editions of George Gershwin's concert music. Mr. Schissel will be overseeing the editing of such iconic works as An American in Paris and Rhapsody in Blue.