

See Linda Charlton,  
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this file.

## 'Lincoln' Work Deleted

# A Sour Inaugural Note

### New York

A work composed for the official inaugural concert to be played by the Philadelphia Orchestra at Kennedy Center in Washington on January 19 has been deleted from the program by the Presidential Inaugural Committee.

The composer, Vincent Persichetti, said he had been told that the action was taken because the text of the work might embarrass President Nixon. The text is Lincoln's second inaugural address, and Persichetti said he had been asked to use it by the committee.

However, the press officer for the committee, Powell Moore, said yesterday: "I'm told by the people involved that there was no firm commitment that the composition would be used. The reason for the decision not to use it was not that it might embarrass the President. There must have been some misunderstanding."

Persichetti, a prominent American composer, said he had been asked only three weeks ago to compose a work for narrator and orchestra that would incorporate the brief address delivered by Lincoln at his second inaugural on March 4, 1865. The narrator was to have been Charlton Heston.

Persichetti's initial instincts were to decline. "I did not think it was possible for a composer to do such a thing so quickly," he said, "and politically I was not interested in getting involved because of my personal convictions."

"But I sat up that night reading the address, and I suddenly saw what I could do with it. And I felt that I

could do it for anyone because this was a statement of my strong belief in my fellow human beings and also of my hope for peace."

*... Fondly do we  
hope, fervently  
do we pray ...*

He added: "Because of these beliefs, I worked around the clock — in my case that means 26 or 27 hours a day — and I finished the full score in two weeks. The work is 11 minutes long, and it is for a large orchestra."

Last Tuesday, the Philadelphia Orchestra informed Persichetti that the Inaugural Committee had decided against the work. He was not taken completely by surprise, he said, because he already had worried calls from the committee about the text.

Lincoln's second inaugural address is best known by its last paragraph, which begins; "With malice toward none, with charity for all." However, it is given over chiefly to Lincoln's comments on the Civil War. At one point it says, "The progress of our arms . . . is, I trust reasonably satisfactory, and encouraging to all."

Later in the address, Lincoln said:

*"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be*

sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3000 years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Persichetti, who deleted a few lines from the text to emphasize its universality, said he had not been told which parts, if any, were deemed particularly undesirable for the inaugural concert.

"I was told," he said, "that there had been concerned calls from White House aides to the committee about the text of the

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work, and finally, when I had just about finished it, they asked me if I could substitute 'some pretty poem' so that Charlton Heston could read it."

Moore, the committee's press officer, said the committee had decided that something having to do with the Declaration of Independence would be more in the spirit of the 1973 Inaugural than Lincoln's second inaugural address would be, and that Persichetti had been asked if he could do something with the declaration. Persichetti said that the Declaration of Independence had never been mentioned to him.

Persichetti, a 57-year-old

Philadelphian who commutes to New York to teach at the Juilliard School, said he had been asked to compose the work on the recommendation of Eugene Ormandy, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Persichetti was disappointed that his work, "A Lincoln Address," would not be performed, but he took the matter calmly and said: "I believe in the piece, and I assume that it will be performed somewhere."

The program announced for the inaugural concert consists of Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor (with Van Cliburn as soloist) and Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

A group of members of the orchestra announced that they were unhappy about having to play the concert, and several religious and peace organizations in Philadelphia have asked the orchestra not to perform.

"Some members are very conscience-stricken at being

*... may  
speedily  
pass away ...*

put in a position where they are playing at the inauguration," said Wilfred Batchelder, a double-bass player. He said that he would not play, and that the members in general had no plans to force a cancellation of the engagement.

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