

**Dimitri Kabalevsky: The
Comedians**
**Gustav Mahler: Symphony
No. 1, Slow Movement**
**Richard Strauss: Till
Eulenspiegel's Merry
Pranks**

Arranged by Rick Robinson
CutTime Productions
www.cutttime.com
(313) 886-0882

A bass player wishing to play chamber music has to be resourceful. We all know that our options are limited when it comes to playing chamber music from the great composers of the past. A bass player wishing to play the orchestral repertoire has to be resourceful. We all know how difficult it is to land an orchestra position. A bass player who wants to do both has to be dou-

bly resourceful. Enter Rick Robinson and his CutTime Productions Company.

During a 1983 college performance of Stravinsky's *Histoire du Soldat*, Mr. Robinson had the idea of transcribing some famous orchestra works for the same instrumentation. He began with Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel*, Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and a couple of others. Along the way he added flute to the instrumentation. This activity soon became CutTime Productions and now boasts a catalog of over 30 septet or octet transcriptions from composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler, Mozart, Ravel, Vivaldi and others.

The transcriptions are very well done. They are clear, concise, and faithful to the originals. What they lack in terms of orchestral heft, they make up for in terms of clarity and lightness. As Mr. Robinson explains, "Where possible I use the original symphonic licks for these instruments, then fill in what's missing." The players need to be well trained and skillful as these transcriptions are not simplified versions of the orchestra works. In other words, the difficult bass licks in the orchestra version of *Till Eulenspiegel* are still difficult licks in the chamber version.

The septets are scored for clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion, violin, and double bass. The octets add the flute to this instrumentation. It is delightfully fun to play this repertoire in this format. These transcriptions would be great additions to outreach programs and other chamber music concerts. Mr. Robinson is providing a valuable and entertaining expansion to the bass player's chamber music options.

– Review by Robert Black