

THE SEVENTH ARMY

*I*n 1956, “The Stars and Stripes,” the American military daily newspaper, wrote about Henry Lewis and his work with the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra. In it, the author stated the following:

“What is amazing about the orchestra is that it is composed of just plain soldiers, just everyday boys with a talent for music. What is even more amazing is the fact that the genius of this group, Sp3 Henry Lewis, is only 23 years old.

“To watch this astonishing youth lead the orchestra through difficult operatic arias, through the intricate softness of a Brahms melody or the crashing thunder of a Wagnerian opus is to realize the genius which is his and the remarkable mastery of the group of young soldiers whom he has welded into a symphonic unit which has raised it to eminence.”



MAESTRO LEWIS

In Spanish, the word “maestro” means teacher. In Italian, it means “master.” In the world of classical music, it is a term of respect given to distinguished conductors and musicians. It is a fitting title, then, for a man who was both a teacher and a master of his craft. During his 40-year career, Henry Lewis would be invited to guest conduct the orchestras of the world’s great capital cities including London, Paris, Tokyo, Milan, and Copenhagen. From the very beginning, he exhibited a natural flair for conducting and was recognized by critics for his command of an orchestra and his deep understanding of music. In 2015, Lewis was posthumously inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. His discography is extensive and includes recordings with some of the world’s most prestigious artists. Perhaps his most indelible legacy, however, was his love for music and his dedication to ensuring that classical performance should be available to everyone. Shortly after joining the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Lewis arranged concerts in local neighborhoods, where, historically, performances of classical music were virtually unknown.