



Colonel Michael J. Colburn, Director

5MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Sunday, February 9, 2014 at 2:00 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Captain Michelle A. Rakers, conducting

Evocations

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Letter From Home

Kevin Puts (b. 1972)

Clarinet Concerto (2008-09)

Vigil
Surge

GySgt Michelle Urzynick, soloist

INTERMISSION

György Ligeti (1923–2006)

Concert Romanesc

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Legends, Opus 59

No. 1: Allegretto
No. 5: Allegro giusto
No. 3: Allegro giusto

The Marine Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, February 16 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, DC. The program will include works by Bach, Barber, and Corea.
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PLEASE NOTE: The use of recording devices and flash photography is prohibited during the concert.

PROGRAM NOTES

Letter From Home

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Aaron Copland's musical training began when he was a teenager, when his sister taught him piano. His interest in music grew boundlessly, and after attending his first concert at age fifteen, he knew he wanted to compose. In 1920 he was offered a scholarship to the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, where he studied composition with Nadia Boulanger for three years. After returning to New York, Copland's early compositions reveal the influence of American jazz rhythms and his work began to take a more abstract approach. America's interest in abstract music, however, was weakening and beginning in 1938 Copland's intent was to compose music that would reach a broader public. During this period of about ten years he composed the ballets *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, the latter for which he won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize. He also wrote music for films to include *The Red Pony* and *Of Mice and Men* and additionally composed *Lincoln Portrait* and his Third Symphony. Copland continued to reach out to the American music listener through his book *What to Listen for in Music*.

It is no surprise, given his interest in reaching out to more of the American public, that Copland felt compelled to find some way to contribute to the war effort during World War II. His opportunity arrived via an invitation from conductor and composer Paul Whiteman on behalf of the American Broadcasting System, who was appealing to the biggest names in music to compose patriotic orchestral selections to broadcast to the American troops. The result was Copland's *Letter from Home*, a short work that evokes nostalgia, energy, tension, and reflection, and paints a soundscape that is suggestive of the unbearable pain of war while also conjuring images of a homesick warrior who is longing to be back home with family.

Clarinet Concerto (2008-09)

Kevin Puts (b. 1972)

Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for the opera *Silent Night*, Kevin Puts has been hailed as one of the most important composers of his generation. His work has been commissioned and performed by leading orchestras in the United States and abroad, including the New York Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchestër (Zurich), the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta, Colorado, Houston, Fort Worth, Utah, St. Louis, the Boston Pops, and the Minnesota Orchestra which commissioned his *Sinfonia Concertante*. Leading chamber ensembles such as the Mirò Quartet, the Eroica Trio, eighth blackbird, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center have also sought out Puts for commissions.

Puts' orchestral catalog includes four symphonies as well as several concertos written for some of today's top soloists. In 2005, he received the tremendous honor of a commission in celebration of conductor and violinist David Zinman's seventieth birthday, and the result was *Vision*, a cello concerto premièred by Yo-Yo Ma and the Aspen Music Festival Orchestra. During the same year, his Percussion Concerto was premièred by Evelyn Glennie with the Pacific and Utah Symphonies. He has also written concertos for marimbist Makoto Nakura, violinist Michael Shih, clarinetist Bil Jackson, and a piano concerto commissioned by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and premièred in 2008 by pianist and conductor Jeffrey Kahane.

A native of St. Louis Puts received his training as a composer and pianist at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Since 2006, he has been a member of the composition department at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore. The composer provided the following note for his Clarinet Concerto:

I met the extraordinary clarinetist Bil Jackson when he premiered my *Four Airs* at Music from Angel Fire (New Mexico) in the summer of 2004. That summer, he also played the fiercely difficult clarinet part in my trio *And Legions Will Rise*, and I believe it was his enthusiasm for this piece which led him to commission—with the generous help of Kathryn Gould and Meet the Composer—my *Clarinet Concerto*.

Inspiration is often hard to come by, and I don't rely on it as a rule. But flipping channels one night, I came across an HBO documentary called *Section 60* and I immediately thought of the opening music of this concerto. Section 60 is the part of Arlington National Cemetery in which U.S. military personnel killed in Iraq and Afghanistan are buried, and the film bears largely unsentimental but thoroughly devastating witness to the family members of these victims as they form communities at the burial site and attempt to come to terms with their loss.

I decided the first movement (Vigil) would be elegiac, meditative, and lyrical, sometimes nostalgic, dreamlike, and even tragic in places. It would act as a “book of memories” so to speak, and for the most part would be about introspection and looking back. By means of necessary contrast, the second and final movement (Surge) would be driving and headlong. Where in the first movement the clarinetist makes smooth melodic contours in rhythms that sound almost improvised, the second would involve angular, staccato bursts of notes and an almost robotic sense of rhythm. Where the first movement is about reflection, the second can only roll forward incessantly and inexorably.

I have always loved Aaron Copland's Concerto for Clarinet, scored for strings with harp and piano. Though I have made no attempt here to create a “companion piece” for Copland's, I realized after a great deal of thought that this instrumentation was ideal for my purposes, though I added one percussionist who is assigned a variety of instruments.

Clarinet Concerto was given its premiere on April 10, 2009, with clarinetist Bill Jackson and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra led by Jeffrey Kahane.

Gunnery Sergeant Michelle Urzynecok, clarinet soloist

Clarinetist GySgt Michelle Urzynecok joined “The President's Own” United States Marine Band in August 2000. She began her musical instruction at age twelve. Upon graduating from the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan in 1990, she attended the Eastman School of Music where she earned a bachelor's degree in 1994 and studied with the late Peter Hadcock and Stanley Hasty. She earned a master's degree in 1996 from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she studied with Deborah Chodacki. She also attended the Hochschule für Musik “Hanns Eisler” in Berlin, Germany, where in 1999 she earned a Diplom Orchester Musiker and a performer's certificate in 2000.

Her solos with “The President's Own” include Carl Maria von Weber's Fantasia and Rondo, Witold Lutoslawski's *Dance Preludes*, and J. M. Molter's Concerto No. 1. In 2012, GySgt Urzynecok performed Vincenzo Bellini's Gran Duetto Concertato “La Sonnambula” for E-flat and B-flat clarinets with Staff Sergeant Christopher Grant at the International ClarinetFest in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Prior to joining “The President's Own,” GySgt Urzynecok was a freelance musician in Berlin and performed with the Preußisches Kammerorchester in Prenzlau, Germany.

Concert Romanesc
György Ligeti (1923–2006)

György Ligeti was born the son of Hungarian-Jewish parents in Transylvania, Hungary, now Târnăveni, Romania. Although he received a solid musical education, it was not without tremendous strife. His brother, at age sixteen, was sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp in upper Austria and both parents were sent to Auschwitz. Ligeti also endured forced labor but ultimately, along with his mother, survived the horror of World War II. He returned to Budapest, Hungary, and graduated from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 1949, having studied with Pál Kadosa, Ferenc Farkas, and Zoltán Kodály. His early work was largely folk-based choral music that reflected the influence of Béla Bartók. Ligeti eventually left his homeland after the failed Hungarian Uprising in 1956 and settled in Germany where he was part of the second generation of young composers affiliated with the avant-garde music center of Darmstadt. His best known works include *Apparitions* (1959), *Lontano* (1967), and his only opera, *Le Grand Macabre* (1978). Ligeti is best known to the larger public for music that was used without his permission when Stanley Kubrick included excerpts from several of his works to create the soundtrack to *2001: A Space Odyssey*. After winning a lawsuit against Kubrick for altering his work without his knowledge, Ligeti granted permission for Kubrick to use his work in *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. Martin Scorsese also used *Lontano* in his psychological thriller *Shutter Island*.

One of his early orchestral works, *Concert Romanesc* is clearly in the tradition of folk settings of his teachers Kodály and Bartók. Although it is in four movements, each is to be played attacca, without separation. The first movement is reflective of a modal quality of the Renaissance period, with constant rhythmic meter alterations. The second movement is a quick, energetic dance that is followed by a slow movement featuring the French horns performing as natural horns. This recalls the time when Ligeti was three years old and heard the alpenhorn for the first time in the Carpathian Mountains. The piece concludes with a wild and somewhat reckless dance, featuring a solo violin that seemingly wants to continue long into the night until the final forceful chord from the orchestra closes out the work. After the piece received its first read-through by the Hungarian Radio Orchestra, the censors denied it a live performance. The score was lost, but was eventually recreated from the existing orchestral parts.

Ligeti later offered the following thought about his *Concert Romanesc*, a piece that intensely evokes Romanian folk music, recalling his memories of folk musicians on violins and bagpipes.

In 1949, when I was twenty-six, I learned how to transcribe folk songs from wax cylinders at the Folklore Institute in Bucharest. Many of these melodies stuck in my memory and led in 1951 to the composition of my Romanian Concerto [*Concert Romanesc*]. However, not everything in it is genuinely Romanian as I also invented elements in the spirit of the village bands. I was later able to hear the piece at an orchestral rehearsal in Budapest—a public performance had been forbidden. Under Stalin’s dictatorship, even folk music was allowed only in a “politically correct” form, in other words, if forced into a straitjacket of the norms of socialist realism. . . . The peculiar way in which village bands harmonized their music, often full of dissonances and “against the grain,” was regarded as incorrect. In the fourth movement of my Romanian Concerto there is a passage in which an F-sharp is heard in the context of F major. This was reason enough for the apparatchiks responsible for the arts to ban the entire piece.

Legends, Opus 59

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Antonín Dvořák was born in 1841 and spent most of his life in the village of Nelahozeves, north of Prague. He studied music at the Prague Organ School and by 1862 was principal violist in the Bohemian Provisional Theater Orchestra. Bedrich Smetana became the chief conductor of that orchestra in 1866 and for several years was clearly a tremendous influence on the young Dvořák. Dvořák left his performing post in 1871 so he could commit more time to composition. A prolific young composer, he won the Austrian State Stipendium three out of four years and caught the attention of Johannes Brahms. Brahms championed Dvořák's craft and convinced his own publishing company, Simrock, to take on the young Czech.

Shortly after Simrock agreed to publish Dvořák's works, they commissioned him to compose his first set of Slavonic Dances, no doubt hoping to capitalize on the success of Brahms' Hungarian Dances. One could surmise that it was through this prompting that Dvořák continued to evoke the spirit of Czech folk music in his work. His interest in folk music reached all the way to the United States and he strongly encouraged American composers such as George Chadwick and Amy Beach to utilize their own cultural identity in their compositions. He later came to America, serving as the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York from 1892 to 1895. While in New York, he wrote his best-known work, Symphony No. 9, *From the New World*, which contains elements of American spirituals and Native American music. He returned to his own country at the end of his life to assume directorship of the Conservatory in Prague in 1901, a post he held until his death in 1904.

Dvořák originally conceived his Opus 59, *Legends*, to be a work for piano four-hands, but it was his publisher that urged him to create this orchestration. It was composed just after the success of his *Slavonic Dances*, and like his previous works, received tremendous praise from his mentor Brahms. While the title implies these ten movements to be works of a programmatic nature, they are essentially character pieces designed to be performed in any combination of movements. We invite you to let your mind wander and allow the music to evoke whatever characters may come to the imagination, from the meager peasant worker to the most heralded of legendary heroes.