



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

Saturday, August 16, 2014 at 7:30 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
1st Lieutenant Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

Serenade for Strings in E minor, Opus 20

Allegro piacevole
Larghetto
Allegretto

David Lyon (b. 1938)

Concerto for Horn and Strings (1977)

Allegro con spirito
Lento elegiaco
Allegro impetuoso

GySgt Greta Richard, soloist

INTERMISSION

Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

Capriol Suite (1926)

Basse-Danse
Pavane
Tordion
Bransles
Pieds-en-l'air
Mattachins

Gerald Finzi (1901–56)

Romance, Opus 11 (1928)

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Suite for Strings (1971)

A-Roving
I have a bonnet trimmed with blue
O waly waly
Dashing away

PROGRAM NOTES

Serenade for Strings in E minor, Opus 20

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

The fourth of seven children, Edward Elgar grew up in a musical environment. His father owned the local music shop, served as the community's piano tuner, and played organ at the Catholic church. With access to several musical instruments and the scores of some of the greatest composers, Elgar immersed himself in music, learning whatever he could. Though as a boy he took violin lessons from the local violin teacher, he had no formal training in music. His desire to attend the Leipzig Conservatory was impossible due to financial constraints. To make ends meet, the self-taught composer free lanced, played organ for church services, and taught private lessons. It was in one of his piano pupils, the daughter of a senior British army officer, that Elgar found his mate. Alice was his musical inspiration, and they married in 1889. It was nearly ten years later with the première of *Enigma Variations*, Opus 36 that Elgar finally achieved national and international recognition.

Elgar's earliest well-known work, *Serenade for Strings in E minor*, Opus 20, became widely popular only after the success of *Enigma Variations* thrust his music to the forefront of British culture. The *Serenade* was completed in its current form seven years prior to the première of *Enigma Variations*, and its origins remain unknown. Presented to his wife as gift for their third anniversary, many scholars believe it to be a derivation of his 1888 work, *Three Pieces for String Orchestra*, the manuscript of which has been lost. Luckily, a program from its première performance survives, and it includes the titles of the three pieces: Spring Song, Elegy, and Finale. These titles correlate precisely with the spirit of the three movements of the *Serenade*. The first, *Allegro piacevole*, contains lush, romantic melodies which are at times joyous and nostalgic. The middle movement, *Larghetto*, is the emotional centerpiece of the work. The impassioned melody employs large intervallic leaps and rich orchestration showcasing the composer's compositional craft. The final movement, *Allegretto*, is very playful and brings the work full circle by reprising material from the first movement.

Elgar frequently referred to the *Serenade for Strings* as his favorite work. In a letter to a friend he wrote: "I like 'em—the best thing I ever did." His affection for this work never waned; how fitting that it was the last piece he himself recorded just six months before his death.

Concerto for Horn and Strings (1977)

David Lyon (b. 1938)

As with Elgar, David Lyon's music can be characterized by his careful attention to beautiful, tuneful, and seemingly ubiquitous melodies. Born in Walsall, England, in 1938, Lyon began his musical studies on the piano at age eight. It was the sound of the symphony orchestra, though, that captivated his imagination. While finding his own voice as a composer, some have likened his early works to that of Jean Sibelius. "Hearing the fifth symphony for the first time was like listening to my own imagination," Lyon said. As his writing progressed, however, his voice developed more in line with the English tradition, specifically in the styles of Elgar and William Walton.

This focus and emphasis on memorable melodies, accessible rhythms, and rich colors can all be heard in his *Concerto for Horn and Strings*. The first movement, *Allegro con spirito*, begins with a three-note rhythmic gesture that serves as an anchor for the entire section. One can hear this rhythm strategically displaced throughout, but always serving as a natural vessel to deliver his carefully crafted melody. Similarly, the second theme of this movement focuses on a new rhythmic gesture, equally as short but syncopated, to deliver the melody. The middle movement, *Lento elegiaco*, places the listener's full focus on the mournful yet at times sweeping melody that seems to constantly be reaching ever upward. The final movement, *Allegro impetuoso*, is a quick, vibrant, and technical ride again centered on a rhythmic gesture. This enjoyable and memorable work remains very much in the abounding tradition of British horn concerti.

GySgt Greta Richard, French horn soloist

French horn player Gunnery Sergeant Greta Richard joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in June 2000. GySgt Richard began her musical career at age eleven. Upon graduating in 1992 from Mahtomedi High School in Mahtomedi, Minnesota, she attended Ithaca College in New York where she earned a dual bachelor’s degree in music education and performance in 1997. In 2000, she earned a master’s degree in music performance from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Her instructors included Jack Covert of Ithaca College and Gregory Hustis of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” GySgt Richard performed with the Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in Durban, South Africa; the Dallas Wind Symphony; and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

Capriol Suite (1926)

Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

British composer Peter Warlock is the pseudonym for Philip Arnold Heseltine, who was born into a wealthy family with strong artistic connections. While it was Sibelius’s fifth symphony that first inspired David Lyon’s imagination, it was a performance of Frederick Delius’s *Lebenstanz* at Royal Albert Hall that made a profound impression on Warlock. Delius became a mentor to him at an early age and was a lifelong friend.

Deciding not to follow the family tradition of work in the stock exchange or civil service, Warlock never established a conventional career. He was a published music critic, a music editor, and perhaps most significantly, a revolutionary scholar in the study, arrangement, and transcription of early music. To some, it was as if he led a double life, writing confrontational and controversial music critiques published under his given name while writing songs in his own original style using the pseudonym. It was during this period in his life, the 1920s, where much of his music was written, including his most famous work, the *Capriol Suite*.

This suite for string orchestra is set of six contrasting dances in a renaissance style. Each movement is based on music in a manual of renaissance dances by the French priest Jehan Tabourot (1519–95). Coincidentally, this manual, *Orchésographie*, was also published under a *nom de plume*, the anagram Thoinot Arbeau. The essence of Warlock’s *Capriol Suite* is new and innovative; his treatment of the dances is very free and bears little resemblance to the tunes in their original form. Because of this, the work is widely considered more of an original composition than an arrangement of existing material. Each of the dances is presented in the order in which they appear in Tabourot’s manual with this exception of Bransles, which includes portions of several different tunes. Each movement title reflects the specific dance being portrayed, for example Mattachins is a sword dance, and Bransles are country dances. The fifth and perhaps most famous movement’s title derives its name, Pieds-en-l’air, from the instruction given to the dancer, rather than the style of dance itself. Translated literally, Pieds-en-l’air means “feet in air,” instructing the dancer to glide across the floor as if their feet never touch the ground. Of particular note is Warlock’s occasional use of more adventurous harmonies. These discords, used very sparingly, not only exhibit Warlock’s unique stamp but also reveal these dances in a distinctly modern light.

Romance, Opus 11 (1928)

Gerald Finzi (1901–56)

Born in London at the turn of the twentieth century, Gerald Finzi was the son of a shipbroker. Very early in his life, Finzi experienced a series of tragic and traumatic events. By age eight he had lost his father. Ernest Farrar, with whom he privately studied music, perished in the First World War. And unimaginably, all three of his brothers also died shortly thereafter: one was lost to suicide, the second to pneumonia, and the third killed in action. His sister was the only sibling to survive beyond the war. Undoubtedly, these devastating losses shaped his worldview, his pacifist nature, his introversion, and ultimately his music. As a young adult, Finzi isolated himself in the countryside, experiencing the same vistas that inspired Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Finzi was encouraged by conductor Sir Adrian Boult, who had recently conducted the première performance of Gustav Holst’s *The Planets*, to study counterpoint. Taking the suggestion, he eventually returned to London in 1925

where he found himself in a circle of young musicians, attending concerts and theatre performances, and meeting both Holst and Vaughan Williams.

It was during this time that Finzi penned his *Romance*, Opus 11 for string orchestra. The piece remained unpublished until 1951 when it finally received its première performance by the Reading String Players conducted by John Russell, to whom the piece was dedicated. Earlier that same year, Finzi had learned he suffered from Hodgkin's Disease and was given only ten years to live. He kept the news to himself and his family, and five short years later, while on a trip with Vaughn Williams, he fell ill with chicken pox and never recovered.

One cannot help but feel the sense of longing and sadness underneath the gorgeous melodies, clear passion, and brutal honesty of the *Romance*. The piece begins with a very ethereal texture from which a solo violin emerges with a motive that is really an answer to a question yet to be asked. This gesture never reappears as simply stated or as innocent as in this introduction. The main theme of the work is rich, evocative, and nostalgic. The violin solo reemerges to state a new theme at a slightly faster tempo and lighter in nature, but always grounded. After its masterful development and dramatic peak, the main theme returns, like an old friend, putting the listener and performer at ease. The piece slowly evaporates, peaceful and placid.

Suite for Strings (1971)

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Born in London, John Rutter's first published compositions and recordings were released while he was still a student at Clare College, Cambridge. He is known throughout the world for his choral work, earning him a reputation as the most successful living composer in that field. Rutter's writing also follows the tradition of Holst and Vaughan Williams. His work by no means is limited to the choral arts; he also has several large and small ensemble compositions for instrumentalists to his credit. Perhaps most notable among his compositional attributes is this skill of carefully crafting melodic material resulting in very memorable phrases. *Suite for Strings* is a wonderful example of this trait.

The suite, published in 1973, showcases Rutter's ability to create evocative and inspiring settings of existing and well-known melodies, making them uniquely his own. Like Warlock, the resulting work is more of an original composition than an arrangement. This four-movement work is not too far removed from the realm of vocal music as each is based on popular British folk songs. The first movement cleverly pairs two different folk songs such that they feel they have always been together, much like Holst's brilliant example in the final movement of his *St. Paul's Suite*. Rutter uses the folk song "I sowed the seeds of love" as a companion to "A-Roving." The second movement provides a charming and graceful treatment of "I have a bonnet trimmed with blue." This is followed by his stunning and very popular treatment of "O waly waly." This melody, known to many as "The water is wide," begins very expressively with solo violin. It gradually swells with the reverent statement made by soli cello to a fitting climax. The violin solo reappears, this time with a beautiful countermelody in the solo viola. The final movement is a quick and thrilling ride that again partners two folk songs: "Dashing away" and "The bailiff's daughter of Islington." Rutter's use of counterpoint, unique harmonization, fugal textures, and melodic voicing in addition to a variety of string techniques keep this finale lively and engaging.

"The President's Own" Marine Chamber Orchestra performed the third movement "O waly waly" at the memorial service for thirty-eighth President of the United States Gerald R. Ford at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. on January 2, 2007, at the request of the Ford family.