THE PRESIDENT'S OWN

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, May 10, 2015 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Fantasie No. 7 in E-flat, TWV 40:20

Dolce
Allegro
Largo
Presto

GySgt Erika Sato, violin

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

String Quartet No. 2, Opus 17 (1915–17)

Moderato
Allegro molto, capriccioso
Lento

MSgt Regino Madrid and SSgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin
SSgt Sarah Hart, viola
SSgt Charlaine Prescott, cello

INTERMISSION

Reinhold Glière (1875–1956)
transcribed by Frank Proto

Suite for Violin and Bass (1909)

Prelude
Gavotte
Cradle Song
Intermezzo
Scherzo

SSgt Karen Johnson, violin
GySgt Eric Sabo, bass

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Violin Sonata No. 2 (1923–27)

Allegretto
Blues: Moderato
Perpetuum mobile

SSgt Christopher Franke, violin
GySgt AnnaMaria Mottola, piano

The Marine Chamber Orchestra will perform Sunday, May 17 at 2:00 P.M. in the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus. The program will feature works by Brahms and Dvořák.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Fantasie No. 7 in E-flat, TWV 40:20

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Georg Phillipp Telemann was considered one of the most innovative and leading German Baroque composers of the early eighteenth century. He was an immensely talented and self-taught student who, despite his mother's wishes, forged a successful and productive career in music, considering the violin to be his foremost instrument.

The Twelve Fantasies for Violin were written for the amateur or student player so they could be performed in a variety of settings, both in concert and privately. Telemann was also interested in composing music that could be performed without basso continuo, a common characteristic of the baroque style. The seventh Fantasie follows a four-movement structure, a favored element of Telemann's compositions. The first movement, Dolce (Italian for "sweet"), opens the piece in a soft, lyrical tone. The Allegro second movement is playful and effervescent, followed by the Largo in somber contrast. Here the melodic lines are simply written in the first statement and the performer can embellish on the second pass. A rousing, dance-like Presto closes out the piece.

String Quartet No. 2, Opus 17 (1915–17)

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Béla Bartók was a Hungarian composer and pianist. A prominent composer of the twentieth century, he was a pioneer in the field of ethnomusicology, which is the examination of music in the context of its people, area, and traditions. Prior to World War I, he traveled to various villages in Hungary to study and archive folk songs by recording them with wax cylinders. Bartók spent many hours analyzing and listening to this music, eventually allowing its characteristics and subtleties to be absorbed into his own compositional style.

Bartók's incorporation of these folk elements was evident in all six of his string quartets. He completed his first string quartet fairly quickly; however, it took almost three years to complete his second quartet in 1917. Understandably so, anyone would find it difficult to be inspired and creative during the chaos and destruction of the Great War. However, this interruption might have ultimately allowed Bartók time to contemplate and experiment. In retrospect, his second quartet took a pivotal turn towards a bolder and more complex compositional style.

Dedicated to and premièred by the Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet, the three movements of String Quartet No. 2 buck the trend of a fast-slow-fast format by opening with a moderate movement, followed by a fast middle movement, and closing with a lethargic final movement. Bartók's good friend and fellow composer Zoltán Kodály characterized these three movements as "life episodes:" birth and growing, living, and dying. The first two bars of the first movement contain the seed of musical material, which seems to be in constant growth and development throughout the movement. The second movement is a vigorous and intense rondo which highlights melodic and rhythmic material inspired by Arabic music heard during Bartók's trip to North Africa. The final movement is melodically and rhythmically static in comparison to the previous movement, but it offers tranquil lines and harmonies interrupted by dramatic pauses.

Suite for Violin and Bass (1909)

Reinhold Glière (1875–1956)
transcribed by Frank Proto

Reinhold Glière was a Russian composer, conductor, and violinist who composed symphonies, opera, choral and vocal works, solo piano music, ballets, and a great deal of chamber music. His original compositions for the double bass include his Intermezzo and Tarantella for Double Bass and Piano, Opus 9, and Praeludium and

Scherzo for Double Bass and Piano, Opus 32, both written between 1900 and 1908. Glière's Eight Duos for Violin and Cello, Opus 39, were published shortly thereafter. Five of the duos were transcribed by Frank Proto for violin and double bass into the Suite for Violin and Double Bass. The reimagined duos are a wonderful blend of old and new. Glière's lyricism mixed with Proto's skilled arranging creates a unique sound that showcases the Russian romantic tradition in a whole new way. The Prelude is murky, mysterious, and densely scored, while the Gavotte is neo-classical and requires a light touch. The Cradle Song is just what one would expect: a peaceful lullaby. The Intermezzo is an elegant waltz. Finally, the Scherzo is a jaunty, rhythmic piece that is sure to impress. In the words of today's performer GySgt Eric Sabo, "After a great deal of experimentation, I've decided to retune my A string up a half-step to B-flat for the final movement of this suite. While this change requires me to relearn a lot of things, it allows me to solidify the key many times throughout the movement including (and most importantly) the final note of the piece."

Proto, who was born in 1941 in Brooklyn, is a composer who works in a wide variety of media. He has been a champion for the double bass, adding numerous compositions and arrangements to its solo and chamber music repertoire. As a double bass student at the Manhattan School of Music, he was faced with a common bass player problem: a lack of music written for the instrument. So, he began writing his own. Many of his compositions are now at the heart of the double bass repertoire and have immensely expanded the role of the instrument.

Violin Sonata No. 2 (1923–27)

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Maurice Ravel is well known as a master orchestrator. He had such command and understanding of each instrument's unique sounds and abilities that he orchestrated some of the most beloved symphonic repertoire, including *Daphnis and Chloe* and *Pictures at an Exhibition*. But even with this mastery of individual instruments, Ravel did not feel that he could truly bring the violin and piano together in a way that would allow them to speak as a unified voice. Ravel states that the violin and piano are "two fundamentally incompatible instruments." His aim then through the Violin Sonata No. 2 was "far from bringing their differences into equilibrium, [but] of emphasizing their irreconcilability through their independence."

By the time Ravel started work on this Sonata, he had lived through what would be the most difficult time in his life: World War I. As an ambulance driver in the French army, Ravel had seen and experienced things that so affected him that he would not even speak of them. Along with these tragic experiences came a change in Ravel's compositional style. No longer did he focus his compositions on the impressionistic style that he and his mentor Claude Debussy are so notable for, but he also began to bring elements of a distinctly American style into his musical compositions. Perhaps influenced by the close proximity of the American troops (and therefore their music) in the Great War, he started to incorporate elements of jazz into his music. While the Violin Sonata No. 2 is still obviously written in Ravel's voice, the differences from his early works (such as his String Quartet or Pavane for a Dead Princess) are very obvious.

The first movement, Allegretto, opens with a light melody in the piano before the violin enters and the two instruments begin trading statements back and forth. It is written with an elegant and sensual style that flows from beginning to end. The movement still has some of Ravel's old impressionistic influences within the writing, but the impressionism is more disjointed and interrupted far more frequently than his early works.

Titled Blues, the second movement shows Ravel's growing fascination with American jazz. It opens with the violin strumming chords, before passing them over to the piano, and proceeding with a melody that evokes the sultry sounds of a saxophone. But despite the jazzy nature of the melodies and his use of the blues chordal structure and progressions, Ravel's take on jazz still has a very definite French influence.

The last movement is titled Perpetuum mobile, and contains exactly what one would expect. The piano starts with a quick statement that is echoed in the violin. After a few more increasingly quick repetitions traded back and forth, the violin starts on a virtuosic progression of uninterrupted sixteenth notes. There are a few references back to brief musical ideas from the Allegretto, but much of the music seems to flow out of the violin in a stream of consciousness style whirlwind of notes until the piece finally comes to its brilliant and glorious end.