



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, October 22, 2017 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Sextet for Two Horns and String Quartet in E-flat, Opus 81b

Allegro con brio

Adagio

Rondo: Allegro

SSgt Cecilia Buettgen and SSgt Brigitte Knox, horn

SSgt Chaerim Smith and MSgt Janet Bailey, violin

MSgt Christopher Shieh, viola

SSgt Charlaire Prescott, cello

Louis Andriessen (b. 1939)

Percosse (1959)

GySgt Elisabeth Plunk, flute

SSgt David Young, bassoon

MSgt Michael Mergen, trumpet

GySgt Thomas Maloy, percussion

Pierre Gabaye (1930–2000)

Sonatine for Flute and Bassoon (1962)

Modéré sans lenteur

Andante

Rapide et brillant

GySgt Elisabeth Plunk, flute

SSgt David Young, bassoon

INTERMISSION

David Popper (1843–1913)

Requiem, Opus 66

SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, SSgt Charlaire Prescott,

and MGySgt Marcio Botelho, cello

SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Contrasts, Sz. 111 (1938)

Verbunkos

Pihenő

Sebes

MSgt Regino Madrid, violin

SSgt Parker Gaims, clarinet

GySgt AnnaMaria Mottola, piano

The Fall Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, Oct. 29 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, D.C. The program will include works by Ewazen, Copland, and Beethoven.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Sextet for Two Horns and String Quartet in E-flat, Opus 81b

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Popular among horn players, Ludwig van Beethoven's Sextet for Two Horns and String Quartet in E-flat, Opus 81b is believed to have been composed around 1794 or 1795 and later published in 1810 by Nikolaus Simrock. Beethoven was just beginning to make a name for himself as a keyboard virtuoso and composer in Vienna, after moving there in 1792. The Sextet was among several works for winds that Beethoven wrote during this early period. Not much is known about its conception, but the virtuosic writing for the horns suggests that Beethoven had particular players in mind when he composed the piece. Simrock, a horn player, performed in the same orchestras as Beethoven while he was living in Bonn, and some speculate Simrock and Beethoven's orchestral colleagues inspired the composition. While this performance is with a string quartet, there is a version that includes a "violoncello e basso" part, indicating that Beethoven most likely meant for a string bass to support the cello line. Both technique and range are on display in the horn parts throughout the first movement, with the second horn part dominated by fast, descending arpeggios and the first horn rising above the staff with scalar passages and soaring lines. One can hear Beethoven's operatic style in the beautifully simple melody that bookends the second movement and the call-and-response horn duet in the middle of the movement. The final movement is a rousing rondo in six-eight time, with emphasis on short, arpeggiated melodies reminiscent of hunting horns.

Percosse (1959)

Louis Andriessen (b. 1939)

Dutch composer Louis Andriessen was born in Utrecht, Netherlands, into a musical family. His father, uncle, and brother were all composers. Andriessen studied composition with his father from 1953 to 1957 before attending the Royal Conservatoire The Hague to study with composer Kees van Baaren. After graduating with a First Prize from the conservatory, he studied privately with Luciano Berio for two years. Andriessen's early compositions were primarily chamber and orchestral works. In the 1970s, he began to compose works of a political nature and explored electronic music. Since the 1980s, he has also written film music and several operas.

Percosse for flute, bassoon, trumpet, and percussion is one of Andriessen's earliest compositions, written while he was a student at the conservatory. After a slow, sparse opening statement, the piece becomes more contrapuntal, utilizing many metric shifts and rhythmic syncopations, much in the style of Igor Stravinsky's chamber music. There is a sublime chorale passage that juxtaposes the earlier, denser writing with an exciting finish.

Sonatine for Flute and Bassoon (1962)

Pierre Gabaye (1930–2000)

Born in Paris, Pierre Gabaye began his musical career at age seven playing piano. After graduating from the Paris Conservatory, he won the *Prix de Rome* in composition, a distinction shared with his fellow composers for the bassoon, Pierre Max Dubois and Roger Boutry. In addition to composing, Gabaye was a gifted conductor, and he conducted light classical music for the French national broadcasting organization Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (RTF) until his retirement in 1986. He then relocated to Chamonix, France, where he died in 2000.

Sonatine unites the flute's sprightly brilliance with the bassoon's sonorous resonance in three neoclassical movements. The opening movement contrasts a jaunty first theme with a flowing second theme. A succession of brief comical episodes reflects the musical caricature popular among Gabaye's peers. The second movement unfolds in contemplative calm, a respite from the buoyant outer movements. Its melodies bloom slowly in the flute while the bassoon meanders in accompaniment. The delightful final movement dances joyously up and down the full range of both instruments, and its articulate exuberance gallops uninterruptedly to a playful conclusion.

Requiem, Opus 66

David Popper (1843–1913)

David Popper was one of the most distinguished and influential cellists of his time. The son of a cantor, he grew up in Prague's Jewish ghetto. When the Hapsburg emperor loosened civil restrictions based on religious affiliation in 1848, Popper was able to pursue music as a vocation. His talent as a young man was so remarkable that he was invited to study with the leading cellist of the day, Julius Goltermann, at the Prague Conservatory. As a soloist and chamber musician, Popper gave numerous premières of works by leading composers of the day, including Johannes Brahms and Robert Schumann. As a pedagogue, Popper made a lasting impact on the development of cello playing and technique, and is perhaps best known for his book of forty études, titled *The High School of Cello Playing*, which is still used worldwide by advanced students. Franz Liszt appointed him to teach at the Budapest Conservatory in 1896, where he remained until his death.

A prolific composer of cello music, Popper expanded the cello's repertoire and its role as a virtuosic solo instrument. He composed his Requiem, Opus 66 in 1892, and dedicated it to the memory of his good friend and first publisher, Daniel Rahter of Hamburg. The work was performed at Popper's own funeral. Its lyrical melodic lines create a musical narrative that is melancholy and elegiac yet by the end, imbued with hope. The texture flows between solos and duets to full-voiced tutti sections. The Requiem remains a beloved work in the cello repertoire today, more than a hundred years after its première, perhaps because its composer understood the instrument so intimately.

Contrasts, Sz. 111 (1938)

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Béla Bartók was one of the twentieth century's preeminent composers. As a young man, he studied piano and composition at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. There, he befriended the composer Zoltán Kodály, and they bonded over a passion for the Magyar folk music of Hungary. Bartók and Kodály toured the Hungarian countryside and compiled folk melodies, which they immediately began to utilize in their compositions. This collection and analysis of folk music led many to label Bartók "The Father (or Founder) of Ethnomusicology." Over the course of his career, he was prolific in multiple mediums: chamber music, concerti, piano works, and orchestral works. He developed a unique and compelling style that included late Romantic and modernist compositional idioms as well as his take on Eastern European folk melodies.

In 1938, jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman commissioned Béla Bartók to write a short piece featuring clarinet and violin, at the urging of virtuoso Hungarian violinist Joseph Szigeti. Szigeti knew Bartók from his early days at the Royal Academy in Budapest and was a lifelong personal and professional affiliate. Goodman initially asked Bartók for a two movement work, and the composer obliged. This version, titled *Rhapsody*, was premiered in Carnegie Hall on January 9, 1939, by Goodman and Szigeti with pianist Endre Petri. Following this performance, Bartók added a middle movement, because he believed the piece to be structurally imbalanced. The new version, renamed *Contrasts*, was premiered on April 21, 1940, also at Carnegie Hall, this time with the composer at the piano.

The first movement, *Verbunkos*, is a Hungarian recruiting dance meant to coax young men into military service. Dotted-rhythm motives appear throughout, and the movement concludes with a difficult clarinet cadenza. The second movement, *Pihenő*, is slow, atmospheric, and a bit darker in character. The last movement, *Sebes*, is a very fast dance supposedly performed by recruits before joining the military. It has a short middle section that feels a bit rhythmically off-putting. The violinist begins the movement on a *scordatura* violin (two of the strings are tuned differently) and later plays a very difficult cadenza. The clarinet and violin perform virtuosically throughout, and extremes of range, dynamic, and rhythmic complexity are displayed, often in quick succession. *Contrasts* is a special piece for clarinetists and violinists alike and has been a staple in the chamber music repertoire since its composition.