



Colonel Michael J. Colburn, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Sunday, March 16, 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

Literary Links

Percy E. Fletcher (1879–1932)
transcribed by Brant Karrick

Vanity Fair

Vincent Persichetti (1915–87)

“O Cool Is the Valley,” Opus 118

Joel Puckett (b. 1977)

Short Stories (2013)

Part I

Somewhere near the end

Introit

The Priests

Part II

Recitative

mother and child

Part III

sonno agitato

The Bridge [cadenza]

Ma Fin

SSgt Karen Johnson and SSgt Chaerim Smith, violin soloists

SSgt Sarah Hart, viola soloist

SSgt Charlaine Prescott, cello soloist

INTERMISSION

John Williams (b. 1932)
arranged by Paul Lavender

Suite from *The Reivers*

MSgt Kevin Bennear, narrator

Franz Liszt (1811–86)
transcribed by Mark Hindsley

Les Préludes

The Marine Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, March 23 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, DC. The program will feature brass and percussion ensembles.
www.marineband.marines.mil | (202) 433-4011 | www.facebook.com/marineband | www.twitter.com/marineband
PLEASE NOTE: The use of recording devices and flash photography is prohibited during the concert.

Webnotes, March 16, 2014

“Literary Links”

Vanity Fair

Percy E. Fletcher (1879–1932)
transcribed by Brant Karrick

Though his music is a rare treat in the modern concert hall, English composer Percy Fletcher enjoyed tremendous success during his lifetime. He specialized in writing for musical theater and was best known for his popular songs and light orchestral suites. He studied violin, piano, and organ, but made his living as a director of musicals in the London theater world, acting as director at the Savoy, Prince of Wales, Daly’s, Drury Lane, and from 1915 until his death in 1932, His Majesty’s Theatre. Fletcher was a pioneer in the repertoire for brass bands; his 1913 tone poem *Labour and Love* paved the way for accomplished composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst to write for the same ensemble.

Fletcher described his *Vanity Fair* as “a comedy overture in which several characters from [William Makepeace] Thackeray’s novel are portrayed” and it is easy to imagine the piece as the introduction to a musical comedy. An opening fanfare gives way to a lyrical middle section after which the spirited fanfare returns with renewed energy, propelling the overture to the finish—or perhaps to the opening of curtains onstage. Originally scored for light orchestra, this lively piece was transcribed for concert band by Brant Karrick, director of bands at Northern Kentucky University in Newport.

“O Cool Is the Valley,” Opus 118

Vincent Persichetti (1915–87)

American composer Vincent Persichetti worked primarily along the east coast of the United States. Head of theory and composition at the Philadelphia Conservatory beginning in 1941, he joined the faculty of The Juilliard School in New York City in 1947 and eventually became the chairman of the composition department. While he composed many works for opera, orchestra, voice, and chamber ensembles, Persichetti also made significant contributions to the band repertoire.

“O Cool Is the Valley” was considered by Persichetti to be a “poem for band.” It was commissioned by the Ohio Music Education Association and premièred by the Bowling Green State University Band with the composer at the helm. The piece parallels the mood of the James Joyce poem of the same name.

O cool is the valley now
And there, love, will we go
For many a choir is singing now

Where Love did sometime go.
And hear you not the thrushes calling,
Calling us away?
O cool and pleasant is the valley
And there, love, will we stay.

Short Stories (2013)

Joel Puckett (b. 1977)

SSgt Karen Johnson and SSgt Chaerim Smith, violin soloists

SSgt Sarah Hart, viola soloist

SSgt Charlaine Prescott, cello soloist

Joel Puckett was born in Atlanta, the son of a Dixieland musician and a classical tubist. His childhood was spent improvising with his father, and he was continually immersed in an eclectic mix of music ranging from classical and contemporary to jazz and popular styles. These diverse influences are often revealed in his original works, and his unique voice has helped establish his place among the next generation of significant young composers. Puckett's music has been played throughout the United States and Europe and has garnered significant critical praise. His work *This Mourning* for tenor soloist, chorus, and orchestra was hailed by Tim Smith of *The Baltimore Sun* as "reaching profound heights . . . comparable in expressive weight [to John Adams' 2000 Pulitzer Prize winning work, *On the Transmigration of Souls*]." Puckett holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and his composition teachers have included William Bolcolm, Michael Daugherty, and Bright Sheng. He has taught at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia, and Towson University in Maryland, and is currently on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He recently finished serving a term as the composer-in-residence of the Chicago Youth Orchestra. Dr. Jacob Wallace, director of bands and assistant professor of music at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, provides the following insight about Puckett's *Short Stories* for string quartet and wind ensemble:

What makes the construct of the short story itself so unique among other literary devices is the demands placed on the author to create a meaningful narrative. They must describe the relationships between characters, present a conflict, and resolve it in a remarkably short span. It takes a deft writer to cleverly craft within these restrictions, and yet some have pushed the genre further by creating collections of stories that seem at first disparate, but eventually are revealed to be intertwined. Much like these painstakingly crafted works of literature, Joel Puckett's *Short Stories* is a study in structure. On the surface, it bears the appearance of eight vignettes strung together into a concerto for solo string quartet and wind ensemble. Upon listening, however, the work's movements reveal themselves as inextricably linked through a layered thematic language that plays out through a sort of "game of pairs."

The external movements of the work serve as a frame story, not unlike Chuck Palahniuk's novel *Haunted*, which the composer cites as an influential on the structure of the work. Between the external movements, Puckett presents three pairs

of linked movements. Each of these sections highlights two of the solo voices, featured at the section's conclusion with a virtuosic duo cadenza. The final internal grouping—the sixth and seventh movements—takes the independent duo cadenzas and superimposes them. It is only at this climactic moment that we hear that the concerto's primary theme—the basis for both the first and last movements—is the combination of the elements within these cadenzas. In a sense, the entire work evolves from the constituent solo playing of its stars.

The opening—amusingly titled “Somewhere near the end”—introduces the notion of pairs in its own way. There is diametric conflict between both the soloists and the ensemble as, until the end of the movement, the two groups play almost exclusively in isolation. The harmonic language likewise poses friction, first hinting at the unbridled optimism of D major, and almost immediately thereafter shattering it with a tempestuous dissonance of extended harmonies in G minor. The effect is that of a series of dramatic wailings that set the stage for the players.

The first internal section, comprising the movements “Introit” and “The Priests,” is based on ancient liturgical materials. The introit itself is a part of the Proper of the Catholic mass, and this placid movement also presents a part of the Mass's Ordinary by way of a “Kyrie,” passed from instrument to instrument in the movement's center. The dramatic beginning of “The Priests” is a stark contrast with its bold chorale scored solely for brass and saxophones, and the rhythmic ostinato from the low strings (“Regina Coeli”: a reference to the antiphon to the Virgin Mary). Complex mixed meters dominate the pulse as a punchy homophonic accompaniment supports the vivid rhythms of the soloists.

The contrasting middle pairing (“Recitative” and “mother and child”) has a basis in Baroque opera, modeling a recitative and aria. “Recitative” serves mostly as an introduction, with a sparse accompaniment of vibraphone, celesta, and harp. The opening of “mother and child” expands the instrumentation to include the woodwinds and horns, dancing about gracefully with a patient, yet lilting tempo. This middle section is the longest single segment of the piece, and harmonically the most static, as it floats past slowly in a cloudy, dreamlike E-flat major. The gentle caress of the violin duet is both captivating and endearing throughout.

The tonal center of E-flat remains for the sixth movement, but little else is held as the pleasant dream of the middle section is roused by “sonno agitato”—literally, “restless sleep.” This movement, solely for the ripieno, harkens back to the most tumultuous moments of the first movement. The pulse quickens unrelentingly and the ensemble spills over, out of control, into “The Bridge,” a cadenza for the concertino. Here the previous duo cadenzas are pressed into conflict with each other in a manner that seems incompatible and dissonant. As the soloists play together, however, the argument between them is sated and they begin to find a synergy in their florid and virtuosic variations. The energetic realization of the work's opening motive ushers in the ebullient “Ma Fin” (a nod to Machaut's rondeau “Ma fin est mon commencement”—literally, “my beginning is my end”). This finale starts with a

return to the first movement, but this time, the soloists come together as one and, with a battering of thirty-second notes, breaks through the restlessness of the ensemble and forces them back on track into the brilliant opening, finally moving together toward their happily ever afters.

Short Stories was commissioned by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, The University of Michigan, The University of Texas, Northwestern University, and the University of Colorado and is dedicated to Kevin Geraldi.

Suite from *The Reivers*

John Williams (b. 1932)

arranged by Paul Lavender

MSgt Kevin Bennear, narrator

William Faulkner's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Reivers* chronicles the adventures of a privileged and sheltered eleven-year-old boy named Lucius Priest ("Loosh") and two older men: the family coachman, Ned McCaslin, and a plantation handyman named Boon Hogganback. When Loosh's grandfather acquires the first automobile in rural Mississippi, a bright yellow Winton Flyer, Boon "borrows" the car and takes Ned and the boy on a whirlwind road trip to Memphis. Along the way, Ned trades grandfather's Flyer for a racehorse, and Loosh is thrust headlong into Boon's grown-up world with all of its vice, conflict, and ultimately, courage and enlightenment.

Both the novel and the 1969 movie starring Steve McQueen as Boon are told from Loosh's perspective as he reminisces upon his adventures some sixty years later. Williams received an Academy Award nomination in 1970 for his nostalgic and colorful score, and this early success helped catapult his career in Hollywood. He later adapted music from the film into a concert suite for orchestra and narrator. This transcription for concert band was created by Paul Lavender for "The President's Own" and received its première when John Williams appeared as guest conductor for the Marine Band's 210th Anniversary concert held in The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., on July 20, 2008.

Les Préludes

Franz Liszt (1811–86)

transcribed by Mark Hindsley

Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt is credited with creating the tone poem. This expanded symphonic form broke down many of the restricting boundaries of the classical symphony that limited opportunities for free expression that composers were seeking during the Romantic period. They sought a more expansive form with a freedom to develop a new musical language to express broad and weighty subjects such as man and nature, and life and death.

Liszt found inspiration for his second tone poem in the French Romantic poet Alphonse de Lamartine's poem "Les Préludes," the fifteenth poem in a collection titled *Nouvelles meditations poétiques* that was published in 1820. Liszt began writing his *Les Préludes* as early as 1848 but it was not première until 1854. Believing that the listener would need some sort of guidance or direction to understand the work, Liszt wrote his own program note that was published with the score:

What is our life but a series of preludes to that unknown song of which death strikes the first solemn note? Love is the enchanted dawn of every life; but where is the destiny in which the first pleasures of happiness are not interrupted by some storm, whose deadly breath dissipates its fair illusions, whose fatal thunderbolt consumes its altar? And where is the soul which, cruelly wounded, does not seek, at the coming of one of these storms, to calm its memories in the tranquil life of the country? Man, however, cannot resign himself to the kindly tedium which has at first charmed him in the companionship of nature, and when "the trumpet has sounded the signal of alarms," he hastens to the post of peril, whatever may be the strife which calls him to the ranks, in order to regain in combat the full consciousness of himself and the complete command of his powers.

Les Préludes proved to be Liszt's most famous tone poem and one of his best-known works. The Sousa Band performed it first in 1894. It was frequently performed on concert tours and was featured on the 1911 World Tour.