



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Sunday, January 23, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.  
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center  
Northern Virginia Community College  
Alexandria Campus  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953)

A Joyous Overture

Jacob Bancks (b. 1982)

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra (2020–21)

Unruly  
Tender  
Defiant

*Ricardo Morales, guest soloist*

## INTERMISSION

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)  
arranged by Arnold Schoenberg

*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer)

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht  
Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld  
Ich hab' ein glühend Messer  
Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz

*MSgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano*

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Variations on a Theme of Haydn, Opus 56a

\*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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# ***PROGRAM NOTES***

## **A Joyous Overture**

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953)

Composer Roberto Sierra was born in Puerto Rico, where he began his musical studies before enrolling at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg as a student of György Ligeti. Sierra has been commissioned by many of the great orchestras around the world, including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra in Glasgow, and Tonhalle Orchester Zurich. Additionally, he has served as composer-in-residence with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, New Mexico Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and The Philadelphia Orchestra. Sierra has been nominated for two Grammy awards and was awarded the Tomás Luis de Victoria Prize in 2017, the highest honor bestowed by Spain upon a Spanish or Latin American composer.

*A Joyous Overture* is exactly the kind of work that its title implies: a bright and propulsive curtain-raiser composed in Sierra's colorful and dramatic language. The title also takes its inspiration from the many allusions to fragments of the famous melody "Ode to Joy" from the finale to Ludwig van Beethoven's legendary Ninth Symphony.

## **Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra (2020–21)**

Jacob Bancks (b. 1982)

American composer Jacob Bancks' music has been praised as "colorfully orchestrated, invitingly lyrical" (*New York Times*) and "highly caffeinated." His works for orchestra have been performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, Annapolis Symphony, South Dakota Symphony, Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony, and New York Youth Symphony. Prestigious chamber ensembles that have performed his works include Eighth Blackbird, Pacifica Quartet, American Modern Ensemble, Schola Antiqua of Chicago, and Cantori New York. Additionally, Banks has enjoyed close collaborations with world-class artists such as clarinetist Ricardo Morales, marimbist Makoto Nakura, mezzo-soprano Julia Bentley, and pianist Kuang-Hao Huang. In early 2022 the Quad City Symphony Orchestra in Iowa will stage Bancks' first opera, *Karkinos*, co-commissioned by Living Proof Exhibit and inspired by more than thirty in-person interviews with people whose lives have been impacted by cancer. He has also worked with the United States Marine Band on three separate commissions for both symphonic band and chamber orchestra.

Born in the small town of Fairmont, Minnesota, Bancks studied composition with Shulamit Ran, Marta Ptaszyńska, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, David Liptak, and Augusta Read Thomas. Bancks holds degrees from the University of Chicago; the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York; and Wheaton College in Illinois. Since 2011, he and his family have made their home in the Quad Cities, a community of Illinois and Iowa towns straddling the Mississippi River. There he serves as associate professor on the faculty of

Augustana College, directs the choir of St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, writes program notes for the Quad City Symphony Orchestra, lectures on music at the German American Heritage Center, and co-hosts a monthly educational program on WVIK public radio.

A 2019 recipient of an Illinois Arts Council Artist Fellowship, Bancks has earned awards, honors, and commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Broadcast Music International, the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music in Lenox, Massachusetts, and the U.S. Department of Education, among many others. Recordings of his music have been released by American Modern Recordings and have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, American Public Media's *Performance Today*, and WFMT Chicago Classical Radio.

Bancks' new Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra was commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra, Quad City Symphony Orchestra, and the United States Marine Chamber Orchestra. Regarding this performance, the composer wrote:

I am honored to be with you here in Virginia for a third time. I have many happy memories of the rehearsals and performances for *The Information Age* (2013) and *Occidental Symphony* (2017), both written for the U.S. Marine Band and conducted by now-Colonel Jason K. Fettig. I have had few experiences with musicians who can match the extraordinarily high artistry and skill of this incredible ensemble, and I am especially glad in this case to work for the first time with the string sections of the Marine Chamber Orchestra. My other two concerts have fallen around cherry blossom time [the spring Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C.], but as a native of Minnesota, this winter concert has me feeling at home. Thank you, to anyone with memories of my previous work, for the honor of having you listen to my music once again.

The composer Tōru Takemitsu wrote, "When one life calls out to another life, sounds are born." A poetic thought, but also an apt description of my life as a composer so far. Most of my works, and certainly those that have meant the most to me, have been written in close collaboration with artists with whom I share a deep and mutual respect; people whose musicianship I deeply admire, and who seem to hear in my music something they understand without explanation.

This was certainly the case when I wrote *Occidental Symphony* in 2016. Col. Fettig and I shared many emails and phone calls, wherein he explained to me the finer differences between cornets and trumpets, expounded on the current state of wind ensemble composition, and delineated the band's near-infinite inventory of percussion instruments. I, in turn, schooled him on obscure Illinois poets, the details of the 1896 presidential election, and the vagaries of how I planned to compose my own quasi-Sousa march and (musically) burn it to the ground. And, as Takemitsu would say, sounds were born.

For any of you who were here at the 2017 première of *Occidental Symphony*, you might remember that Ricardo Morales was also featured on that concert, premièring the wind ensemble version of Jonathan Leshnoff's beautiful clarinet concerto. I was honored to get to know Ricardo during that rehearsal week, to hear his phenomenal playing up close, and to have him listen to my new work and offer his thoughtful response to it. It became clear that, should the opportunity present itself, I would find in him another willing and gifted collaborator.

And, as is obvious now, that opportunity did indeed present itself. Ricardo's institution, The Philadelphia Orchestra, agreed to commission from me a concerto for him to première. And as if things couldn't get any better, the commission turned into a co-commission, with the Marine Chamber Orchestra and my home orchestra, the Quad City Symphony, joining the party. The composing process was much like the one Col.

Fettig and I had shared, although this time the collaboration took place mostly by text message. If the score of my clarinet concerto is ever lost, someone could probably reconstruct the entire thing by looking at my phone.

The première performances of this work were in Philadelphia last November, with Ricardo and his phenomenal colleagues performing with great depth, commitment, and technical flair. Their performance was, to me, a great gift. And to hear the work again a mere few months later, with the same singular soloist and the exceptional musicians of the Marine Chamber Orchestra, is a great gift as well. I wish to share my deep gratitude to Mr. Morales, Col. Fettig, all of musicians of this great chamber orchestra, for bringing their great artistry to my work.

### **Ricardo Morales, guest soloist**

Ricardo Morales is one of the most sought-after clarinetists of today. He joined The Philadelphia Orchestra as principal clarinet in 2003. Prior to this he was principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera (MET) Orchestra, a position he assumed at age twenty-one. His virtuosity and artistry as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician have been hailed and recognized in concert halls around the world. He has been asked to perform as principal clarinet with the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, and at the invitation of Sir Simon Rattle, performed as guest principal clarinet with the Berlin Philharmonic. He also performs as principal clarinet with the Saito Kinen Festival Orchestra and the Mito Chamber Orchestra, at the invitation of Maestro Seiji Ozawa.

A native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Morales began his studies at the Escuela Libre de Música along with his five siblings, who are all distinguished musicians. He continued his studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and Indiana University in Bloomington, where he received his Artist Diploma.

Morales has been a featured soloist with many orchestras, including the MET Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Seoul Philharmonic, and the Flemish Radio Symphony. During his tenure with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, he soloed in Carnegie Hall and on two European tours. He made his solo debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2004 and has since performed as soloist on numerous occasions. Morales performed the world première of the Clarinet Concerto by Jonathan Leshnoff, commissioned for him by The Philadelphia Orchestra.

An active chamber musician, Mr. Morales has performed in the MET Chamber Ensemble series at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Seattle Chamber Music Summer Festival, Saratoga Chamber Music Festival, on NBC's *The Today Show*, and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has performed with many distinguished ensembles, such as the Juilliard Quartet, the Pacifica Quartet, the Miró Quartet, the Leipzig Quartet, and the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio. He has also collaborated with Christoph Eschenbach, André Watts, Emanuel Ax, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, James Ehnes, Gil Shaham, and Kathleen Battle. Morales is highly sought after for his recitals and master classes, which have taken him throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. In addition, he currently serves on the faculty of Temple University in Philadelphia.

Morales' performances have been met with critical acclaim. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* hailed his appointment to The Philadelphia Orchestra, stating that it "in fact, may represent the most salutary personnel event of the orchestra's last decade." He was praised by the *New York Times* as having "fleet technique, utterly natural musical grace, and the lyricism and breath

control of a fine opera singer.” Morales was also singled out in the *New York Times* review of the MET’s production of Berlioz’s *Les Troyens*, which described his playing as “exquisite” and declared that he “deserved a place onstage during curtain calls.”

Morales’s debut solo recording, *French Portraits*, is available on the Boston Records label. His recent recordings include a performance with the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio; an album with the Pacifica Quartet, which was nominated for a Latin Grammy Award; as well as a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto with the Mito Chamber Orchestra for the DECCA label.

### **Songs of a Wayfarer**

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)  
arranged by Arnold Schoenberg

Gustav Mahler once told fellow composer Jean Sibelius, “The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” True to this belief, a significant portion of Mahler’s compositional energies were spent transforming the staid notion of the traditional symphony into a sound world of gargantuan proportions. Between 1888 and his premature death in 1911, Mahler completed nine numbered symphonies, all but a few of which were massive in their scope, concept, and orchestration. Few composers since have matched his grand and all-encompassing idea of the symphony as a musical vehicle.

Mahler’s inspiration as a great and revolutionary symphonist stemmed from his love of Lieder (songs), and the composer’s iconic song cycles often served as the basis for his symphonic movements. Indeed, his songs were frequently conceived with the same grand, dramatic musical scope and language as his symphonies, so the confluence between these two worlds in Mahler’s vernacular was a natural one. He composed his first symphony in 1888, at age twenty-eight, as a symphonic tone poem in two parts, and its composition was inextricably linked to an earlier song cycle. Even before beginning work on the two pieces, Mahler had long admired the writings of German Romantic novelist Jean Paul, and his other likely inspiration for the song cycle was the lyric soprano Johanna Richter, whom Mahler met in 1883 while he was music director of the Royal and Imperial Theater in Kassel, Germany. Mahler quickly became infatuated with Richter and, toward the end of 1884 and into 1885, wrote a series of (unhappy) love poems to her that repeatedly used the phrase “fahrende Gesell” (“wayfarer”). This became the title of the collection of poems, and Mahler set four of them to music, in a song cycle entitled *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer). Two of the songs dedicated to Richter in this cycle became the basis for the outer movements of Mahler’s new symphonic poem, which in the end, become his first symphony.

The words to these musical poems were written by the composer himself; however they were deeply influenced by a collection of German folk poetry that was a particular favorite of Mahler’s, and one that he would return to again and again, called *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth’s Magic Horn*). Although Mahler’s original song cycle was composed for a large orchestra, like his symphonies, Austrian-American composer Arnold Schoenberg brilliantly distilled the work down in a brilliant setting for a chamber orchestra accompanying the solo voice.

The first movement is entitled “Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,” and it details the Wayfarer’s grief at losing his love to another:

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,  
Fröhliche Hochzeit macht,  
Hab' ich meinen traurigen Tag!  
Geh' ich in mein Kämmerlein,  
Dunkles Kämmerlein,  
Weine, wein' um meinen Schatz,  
Um meinen lieben Schatz!

When my darling has her wedding-day,  
her joyous wedding-day,  
I will have my day of mourning!  
I will go to my little room,  
my dark little room,  
and weep, weep for my darling,  
for my dear darling!

Blümlein blau! Verdorre nicht!  
Vöglein süß!  
Du singst auf grüner Heide.  
Ach, wie ist die Welt so schön!  
Ziküth! Ziküth!

Blue flower! Do not wither!  
Sweet little bird—  
you sing on the green heath!  
Alas, how can the world be so fair?  
Chirp! Chirp!

Singet nicht! Blühet nicht!  
Lenz ist ja vorbei!  
Alles Singen ist nun aus!  
Des Abends, wenn ich schlafen geh',  
Denk' ich an mein Leide!  
An mein Leide!

Do not sing; do not bloom!  
Spring is over.  
All singing must now be done.  
At night when I go to sleep,  
I think of my sorrow,  
of my sorrow!

The second movement, "Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld," is the song that served as the basis for the opening movement of Mahler's first symphony. It is the most optimistic music in the cycle, finding the Wayfarer marveling at the beauty of nature with birdsong and dewy grass all around. The happiness cannot last, however, and the movement ends with the blossoms dissipating along with that love is no more.

Ging heut' Morgen über's Feld,  
Tau noch auf den Gräsern hing;  
Sprach zu mir der lust'ge Fink:  
"Ei du! Gelt? Guten Morgen! Ei gelt?  
Du! Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Zink! Zink! Schön und flink!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt!"

I walked across the fields this morning;  
dew still hung on every blade of grass.  
The merry finch spoke to me:  
"Hey! Isn't it? Good morning! Isn't it?  
You! Isn't it becoming a fine world?  
Chirp! Chirp! Fair and sharp!  
How the world delights me!"

Auch die Glockenblum' am Feld  
Hat mir lustig, guter Ding',  
Mit den Glöckchen, klinge, kling,  
Ihren Morgengruß geschellt:  
"Wird's nicht eine schöne Welt?  
Kling, kling! Schönes Ding!  
Wie mir doch die Welt gefällt! Heia!"

Also, the bluebells in the field  
merrily with good spirits  
told out to me with bells (ding, ding)  
their morning greeting:  
"Isn't it becoming a fine world?  
Ding, ding! Fair thing!  
How the world delights me!"

Und da fing im Sonnenschein  
Gleich die Welt zu funkeln an;  
Alles Ton und Farbe gewann  
Im Sonnenschein!  
Blum' und Vogel, groß und Klein!  
"Guten Tag, ist's nicht eine schöne Welt?"

And then, in the sunshine,  
the world suddenly began to glitter;  
everything gained sound and color  
in the sunshine!  
Flower and bird, great and small!  
"Good day, is it not a fine world?"

Ei du, gelt? Schöne Welt!

Hey, isn't it? A fair world?

Nun fängt auch mein Glück wohl an?  
Nein, nein, das ich mein',  
Mir nimmer blühen kann!"

Now will my happiness also begin?  
No, no—the happiness I mean  
can never bloom!"

The third movement is full of the despair of lost love. In "Ich hab' ein glühend Messer," the Wayfarer compares the agony of loneliness to a blade piercing the heart, and contemplates the actual physical act, as everything is a painful reminder of that which is no more.

Ich hab' ein glühend Messer,  
Ein Messer in meiner Brust,  
O weh! Das schneidt' so tief  
in jede Freud' und jede Lust.  
Ach, was ist das für ein böser Gast!  
Nimmer hält er Ruh',  
nimmer hält er Rast,  
Nicht bei Tag, noch bei Nacht,  
wenn ich schlief!  
O weh!

I have a red-hot knife,  
a knife in my breast.  
O woe! It cuts so deeply  
into every joy and delight.  
Alas, what an evil guest it is!  
Never does it rest  
or relax,  
not by day or by night,  
when I would sleep.  
O woe!

Wenn ich den Himmel seh',  
Seh' ich zwei blaue Augen steh'n!  
O weh! Wenn ich im gelben Felde geh',  
Seh' ich von fern das blonde Haar  
Im Winde weh'n!  
O weh!

When I gaze up into the sky  
I see two blue eyes there.  
O woe! When I walk in the yellow field,  
I see from afar her blond hair  
waving in the wind.  
O woe!

Wenn ich aus dem Traum auffahr'  
Und höre klingen ihr silbern Lachen,  
O weh!  
Ich wollt', ich läg' auf der schwarzen Bahr',  
Könnt' nimmer die Augen aufmachen!

When I start from a dream  
and hear the tinkle of her silvery laugh,  
O woe!  
Would that I lay on my black bier—  
Would that I could never again open my eyes!

Mahler again recycled the final movement of the song cycle into the third movement of his first symphony as a musical respite embedded in the tumult of that score. "Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz," finds the Wayfarer laying under a linden tree and allowing the flowers to fall all about. Through the despair, at last a measure of peace and hope incomprehensively begins to find its way through to the Wayfarer.

Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz,  
Die haben mich in die weite Welt geschickt.  
Da muß' ich Abschied nehmen vom  
allerliebsten Platz!  
O Augen blau, warum habt ihr mich angeblickt?  
Nun hab' ich ewig Leid und Grämen!

The two blue eyes of my darling—  
they have sent me into the wide world.  
I had to take my leave of this  
well-beloved place!  
O blue eyes, why did you gaze on me?  
Now I will have eternal sorrow and grief.

Ich bin ausgegangen in stiller Nacht  
wohl über die dunkle Heide.  
Hat mir Niemand Ade gesagt  
Ade!  
Mein Gesell' war Lieb' und Leide!

I went out into the quiet night  
well across the dark heath.  
To me no one bade farewell.  
Farewell!  
My companions are love and sorrow!

Auf der Straße steht ein Lindenbaum,  
Da hab' ich zum ersten Mal im Schlaf geruht!

On the road there stands a linden tree,  
and there for the first time I found rest in  
sleep!

Unter dem Lindenbaum,  
Der hat seine Blüten über mich geschneit,  
Da wußt' ich nicht, wie das Leben tut,  
War Alles, Alles wieder gut!  
Alles! Alles, Lieb' und Leid  
Und Welt und Traum!

Under the linden tree  
that snowed its blossoms onto me—  
I did not know how life went on,  
and all was well again!  
All! All, love and sorrow  
and world and dream!

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### **Master Sergeant Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano**

Mezzo-soprano vocalist and concert moderator Master Sergeant Sara Sheffield joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in May 2005, becoming the first featured female vocal soloist in Marine Band history. Master Sgt. Sheffield began her musical instruction on piano at age nine and voice at age sixteen. After graduating from Jacksonville (Texas) High School in 1997, she attended the University of North Texas in Denton and earned a bachelor’s degree in vocal performance in 2001. In 2016 she earned an executive master’s degree in business administration from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Master Sgt. Sheffield was a member of the U.S. Army Band’s Army Chorale at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia.

### **Variations on a Theme of Haydn, Opus 56a**

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Johannes Brahms was exceptionally critical of his own work, and he painstakingly went about composing for orchestra in the shadow of Ludwig van Beethoven, with whom he felt he simply could not compare. It took Brahms nearly twenty years to finish his first symphony, and he completed only four during his long lifetime. However, Brahms wrote many other masterpieces for orchestra, and his respect and reverence for the master composers who came before him was evident in his commitment to researching and editing their works. He contributed to the publication and promotion of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric



Handel, Giovanni Palestrina, and many more. One of his colleagues was Karl Pohl, librarian for the Philharmonic Society of Vienna and a scholar of the music of fellow Austrian composer Joseph Haydn. It was Pohl who directed Brahms' attention towards a particular work of Haydn's for wind instruments entitled *Feldparthie*. The main theme of the second movement contained a traditional pilgrims' hymn entitled "Chorale Saint Antoni," and Brahms was so captivated by the melody that he copied it down for possible future use. Although scholars have since attributed the composition of *Feldparthie* to Haydn's student Ignaz Pleyel, Brahms' opus has been forever immortalized in tribute to Haydn, as has been the elder composer's association with the now-famous "St. Anthony Chorale."

Brahms faithfully introduces the theme at the very outset of his work in an orchestration for wind ensemble that is remarkably close to the original. After that, however, the piece is entirely crafted in the expert and unmistakable language of Brahms, as he spins the beautifully simple chorale into a stunning series of distinct and creative symphonic variations. *Variations on a Theme of Haydn* was premièred by the Vienna Philharmonic under the composer's baton in 1873, just three years after he jotted the little chorale down in his notebook.