



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, February 9, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

Duetto in D

Allegro

Andante molto

Allegro

SSgt Charlaine Prescott, cello

MSgt Eric Sabo, double bass

Thom Ritter George (b. 1942)

Sextet for Woodwind Quintet and Euphonium (1981)

Allegretto alla Marcia

Pastorale: Lento e mesto

Theme and Variations on an Old English Song: Vivace giocoso

GySgt Kara Santos, flute

GySgt Tessa Vinson, oboe

SSgt Parker Gaims, clarinet

MGySgt Christopher McFarlane, bassoon

SSgt Cecilia Buettgen, horn

SSgt Hiram Diaz, euphonium

John Psathas (b. 1966)

Matre's Dance (1991)

GySgt Jonathan Bisesi, percussion

GySgt AnnaMaria Mottola, piano

INTERMISSION

Walter Perkins (b. 1944)

Concerto for Four Horns (1991)

Introduction and Fanfare

Burlesque

Tarantella

Dialogue

Eastern Dances

*MSgt Greta Richard, SSgt Cecilia Buettgen,
SSgt Timothy Huizenga, and SSgt Brigitte Knox, horn*

Marc Mellits (b. 1966)

Splinter for Reed Quintet (2014)

Scarlet Oak

Sugar Maple

Linden

Black Ash

Cherry

River Birch

Weeping Willow

Red Pine

MSgt Steven Temme, saxophone

SSgt Trevor Mowry, oboe

SSgt Lewis Gilmore, clarinet

SSgt Shannon Kiewitt, bass clarinet

MGySgt Christopher McFarlane, bassoon

The U.S. Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra will perform Monday, February 17 at 7:30 P.M. at
The Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, MD. The program will feature works by Sousa, Higdon, and Williams.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Duetto in D

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

Gioachino Rossini was one of the most prolific composers of Italian opera during the nineteenth century. Although his thirty-nine operas were his claim to fame, his contributions to the chamber music repertoire are cherished by musicians and audiences alike. The Duetto in D is a delightful example of Rossini's operatic genius on full display, even with only two instruments: cello and double bass. The piece was premièred at a party in 1824 by amateur cellist Sir David Salomons and the famous double bass virtuoso Domenico Dragonetti.

Rossini employed a typical nineteenth-century musical palette, full of rich timbres and charming musical lines. The use of the cello and double bass in combination provides the listener with a unique tonal landscape and presents a music-making partnership not often heard in string chamber music. The first and final movements are light and fast, while the Andante molto second movement is slow and lyrical. Although this work may be small in stature, it possesses all of the drama and excitement you would expect from a work composed by one of the greatest opera composers of all time.

Sextet for Woodwind Quintet and Euphonium (1981)

Thom Ritter George (b. 1942)

The 1970s and 1980s were witness to a renaissance of euphonium solo and chamber repertoire. Prior to that time period, scarcely any music outside of the theme and variations form was specifically composed for the mellow brass instrument. The International Tuba Euphonium Association (at the time known as the Tubists Universal Brotherhood Association, or T.U.B.A.) sought to change that trend by commissioning high-profile composers to produce work for the euphonium. Among them were such established composers as Jan Bach, Václav Nelhýbel, and the pen behind this composition, Thom Ritter George.

Growing up in Detroit, George was privileged to study with Harold Laudenslager, a student of Paul Hindemith. Enamored with music, George went on to study at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, earning both bachelor's and master's degrees in composition. While at Eastman, he wrote his Sonata for Baritone Horn, which is still part of the euphonium repertoire to this day. After his initial studies, George accepted a position as arranger/composer with the United States Navy Band, where he served for four years. He held the post of music director with the Quincy Symphony Orchestra in Illinois from 1970 to 1983, and he was later appointed the director of the Idaho State Civic Symphony in Pocatello from 1983 to 2007. George has composed more than 360 works and currently resides in Appleton, Wisconsin, where he frequently guest conducts the orchestra at Lawrence University.

It was during his time as music director of the Quincy Symphony that George was approached to compose the Sextet for Woodwind Quintet and Euphonium. It is believed to be the first composition of its kind and a chamber work of significance to the euphonium repertoire. The first movement, titled Allegretto alla marcia, weaves a jaunty march melody throughout all

six voices, creating a tapestry-like effect. The second movement, Pastorale: Lento e mesto, begins with a haunting oboe melody reminiscent of the first movement's melodic material. This sets up a lengthy muted euphonium solo, leaving the euphonium player to choose the correct timbre of mute to match the woodwind quintet's color. The third movement, Theme and Variations on an Old English Song, is an exciting and lively set of variations on a popular English melody from the 1770s, whose title has been lost to time. Each instrument is featured in unique virtuosic ways. One of the variations contains a melodic snippet of the Marine Corps' service song, The Marines' Hymn, harkening back to the composer's time in the naval service. George's wonderful amalgamation of woodwind quintet and euphonium stands the test of time by being light-hearted, tuneful, and enjoyable to every audience.

Matre's Dance (1991)

John Psathas (b. 1966)

John Psathas is one of New Zealand's most frequently performed composers and has collaborated with high-profile musicians throughout international venues for multiple decades. Creative projects with percussionist Evelyn Glennie, saxophonists Michael Brecker and Joshua Redman, and pianist Michael Houstoun have established Psathas' international profile, and he receives regular commissions from around the world. Career highlights include composing music for the films *Good For Nothing* (2011) and *White Lies* (2013) and the oratorio *Orpheus in Rarohenga* (2002), as well as the creation of ceremonial music for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

Matre's Dance is a maximum-energy duet for percussion and piano. Bursting with rhythmic tension, unpredictable accents, and syncopation, the musical idioms present in this work became typical of much of Psathas' subsequent musical language. The title refers to a dance performed by a group of fanatics in one of Frank Herbert's serial novels entitled *Dune*. The dance was non-repeating and exhausting for the dancers, who often collapsed or died before completing the extremely long, complex routine. Premiered by pianist David Guerin and percussionist Bruce McKinnon, the work later achieved international recognition due to the support of Evelyn Glennie, who recorded it on two of her albums: *Drumming* (1994) and *Greatest Hits* (1998).

Concerto for Four Horns (1991)

Walter Perkins (b. 1944)

Born in England, Walter Perkins grew up in the United States after moving to Rochester, New York, as a child. He received a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, under the tutelage of Samuel Adler. After three years at the U.S. Army West Point Band in New York, Perkins joined the Orchestre de Radio-Télé-Luxembourg (now the Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg) as second trumpet in 1973.

One of Perkins' colleagues in Luxembourg was American horn player and composer Kerry Turner. Turner, along with three other American horn players in European orchestras at the time, established the American Horn Quartet (AHQ) in Europe in 1982. Perkins was so enamored by the performances of AHQ that he created an arrangement of music from Leonard

Bernstein's musical *West Side Story* that "became the calling card of the American Horn Quartet." He composed the Concerto for Four Horns specifically for the AHQ, and they later recorded the piece for their CD *4x4*. Perkins told Turner that he often couldn't tell who was playing which part in the ensemble and therefore decided to feature each member in his own movement. In the words of Kerry Turner, "The end result is a five-movement work of compositional maturity, creative depth with a myriad of colors, and character. It is pretty difficult however! There is constant mixed meter and finger-twisting technical passages, which render the work quite challenging to put together."

Concerto for Four Horns is a virtuosic piece that features each horn player in a solo movement. The first movement, Introduction and Fanfare, begins with a three-note motif passed from one player to the next, accelerating to a galloping fanfare before returning to the opening recitative. The Burlesque showcases the fourth horn player in a satirical character piece that changes meters often and suddenly. The light and quick Tarantella shows off the third horn player in displays of nimble fingers and lyrical finesse, making this lively folk dance a joy to listen to. An expansive soliloquy for the second hornist anchors the Dialogue movement, while the rest of the quartet occasionally responds using trills, muted notes, and sonorous chorales. The principal horn steals the show in an exciting finale, Eastern Dances, a blisteringly fast display of technique and vibrancy.

Splinter for Reed Quintet (2014)

Marc Mellits (b. 1966)

Marc Mellits' music is as eclectic and colorful as the variety of ensembles for which he writes. In addition to orchestral works and music for film, Mellits has composed pieces for many different mixed chamber ensembles. While the woodwind quintet is the traditional wind ensemble of choice for composers, Mellits decided instead to highlight the reed quintet in *Splinter*. A key way in which the reed quintet differs from the woodwind quintet is that the former brings together instruments that all produce their sound in the same manner, by the vibration of reeds; in terms of homogeneity of sound, the reed quintet is more similar to a brass quintet than to a traditional wind quintet. The flute and horn are replaced by saxophone and bass clarinet, both of which utilize reeds like the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. Although Mellits composed his work specifically for the quintet Splinter Reeds, his title is also a nod to the wooden, reed-based nature of the ensemble. Additionally, each of the movements is an ode to a specific tree, furthering the connection to the titular "splinter."

A self-described "miniaturist," Mellits composed eight short movements for *Splinter*, each a portrait of the particular tree described in the title. Repetitive musical phrases gradually evolve over the course of each movement, an often-used compositional technique of minimalism. This style creates an ebb and flow that transitions between tonalities and instrument groupings with ease. Mellits described the movements as "work[ing] together much like a Baroque suite." One can almost hear the trees changing with the seasons as the musical line is passed—sometimes gradually, other times abruptly—from one voice to the next.