



MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 7:30 P.M. ET  
Streaming at [youtube.com/usmarineband](https://www.youtube.com/usmarineband)  
Major Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting

Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

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### Diversions

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1 in G, BWV 1007

*SSgt Charlane Prescott, soloist*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F, BWV 1046

[Allegro]

Adagio

Allegro

Menuet–Trio–Menuet–Polonaise–Menuet–Trio–Menuet

Aaron Copland (1900–90)

Suite from *Appalachian Spring* (1943–44)

Aaron Copland (1900–90)

“Hoe Down” from *Rodeo* (1942)

# ***PROGRAM NOTES***

## **Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1 in G, BWV 1007**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

The six Cello Suites by Johann Sebastian Bach remain some of the composer's most acclaimed and yet most mysterious works in his catalog. Despite the lack of a manuscript in Bach's own hand, the pieces survived in various copied sources, including one by the composer's second wife, Anna Magdalena Bach. Scholars have traced the suites' origins to around 1720, when Bach was employed as Prince Leopold's Kappelmeister in the town of Cöthen, Germany. Because his duties for the prince involved composing secular court music rather than writing for church services, the six years Bach spent in Cöthen were focused primarily on producing instrumental works. This situation afforded him an opportunity to create virtuosic solo pieces for the violin and cello, in addition to his Brandenburg Concertos and the four orchestral suites.

### **Staff Sergeant Charlaine Prescott, cello soloist**

Staff Sergeant Charlaine Prescott joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in December 2013 and was appointed principal cellist in April 2018. Staff Sgt. Prescott began her musical training on piano at age six and cello at age ten. After graduating in 2005 from West Potomac High School in Alexandria, she attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she earned a bachelor's degree in cello performance in 2009. In 2011 she completed a master's degree in classical cello from the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) in New York. She studied with Alan Stepansky at MSM, Hans Jørgen Jensen of NU, and Rachel Young of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining "The President's Own," Staff Sgt. Prescott was a Tanglewood Fellowship recipient in 2010 from the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts, and received the Karl Zeise Memorial Cello Award for the 2010 Tanglewood season. She was the S & R Foundation's 2011 Washington Award and Grand Prize winner. She also was principal cello with the Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio and taught privately.

## **Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F, BWV 1046**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

The six Brandenburg Concertos are among Johann Sebastian Bach's best-known compositions. Bach dedicated these works to Christian Ludwig, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and titled them Six concerts avec plusieurs instruments (Six Concertos for Many Instruments), but it was not until the nineteenth century that a prominent Bach biographer referred to them as the "Brandenburg Concertos," which became the name forever associated with the works.

Wishing to move on from his employer Prince Leopold in Cöthen, Bach compiled and arranged these concertos from some of his earlier compositions and sent them to the margrave in 1721, in the hopes of securing a new position at Brandenburg. Sadly, the gift was so insignificant to the margrave that he never bothered to acknowledge Bach nor did he ever have the works performed.

It is said that the Brandenburg Concertos were left in the margrave's library untouched and uncatalogued in a stack of miscellaneous scores until his death, only to be sorted through for the sole purpose of dividing the margrave's estate among his heirs.

It is speculated that one of the reasons these masterpieces were not initially performed was due to the fact that their instrumentation required more musicians than the margrave employed. While not overtly apparent with many of the concertos in the collection, it is certainly the case for the Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F. Composed around 1718, the piece called for three oboes and two horns, matching the instrumentation of Bach's 1716 cantata *Was mir behagt*, BWV 208, nicknamed the *Hunting Cantata*. In the cantata's final chorus, "Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd," the uplifting horn colors create an aesthetic very similar to the opening of this concerto.

The Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F was originally in three movements, similar to the rest of the set. It was not until a year or so later that the composer inserted the Allegro third movement to expand upon the jubilant character of the opening movement. Additionally, he expanded the finale from its minuet with two trios to a seven-section rondo showcasing the abilities of this larger orchestra. Interestingly, Bach adapted material from this concerto no fewer than three times for use in later cantatas. While the reuse of existing material was certainly common practice at this time, the composer's choice to incorporate it on so many occasions may have indicated his own personal fondness of the music.

### **Suite from *Appalachian Spring* (1943–44)**

Aaron Copland (1900–90)

A native New Yorker, Aaron Copland was educated at Boys' High School in Brooklyn. He studied piano with Victor Wittgenstein and Clarence Adler and, in 1917, began study of harmony and counterpoint with Ruben Goldmark. In 1920 he entered the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, where he worked under the tutelage of famed composer and conductor Nadia Boulanger. He returned to America in 1924 and settled in New York, which remained his home base for the remainder of his life. Copland's works were wide ranging and ambitious, from chamber music and symphonic works, to ballet and opera, but it was his works inspired by American folk motifs that have been most enduring. These included his ballets *Billy the Kid* (1938) and *Rodeo* (1942), and his dramatic Fanfare for the Common Man (1942), which capitalized on the patriotic sentiment of a nation at war.

Copland enjoyed a fruitful artistic collaboration with famed choreographer Martha Graham, which produced some of the most enduring music of his career. In 1942, the well-known arts patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge attended a performance by Graham's dance company. Noting that she had never choreographed a ballet to new original music, Coolidge invited Graham to create three ballets to be premiered at the 1944 fall festival run by the Coolidge Foundation. Three prominent composers—Paul Hindemith, Darius Milhaud, and Copland—were commissioned to write the music for the occasion. Copland began work in Hollywood in June 1943 and completed his score a year later. Graham titled the ballet *Appalachian Spring*, which she borrowed from a poem by Hart Crane. Although the colorful title aptly fit the mood of the ballet, the storyline had absolutely no relationship to the text of the poem itself.

Graham's uniquely American tale portrayed, in the words of music critic Edwin Denby, who wrote a review of the New York premiere in May 1945:

[...] a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly-built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last century. The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbor

suggests now and then the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end, the couple is left quiet and strong in their new house.

Copland's stunning music was the perfect complement to this quaint story, possessing tenderness and strength, conflict and humor, and an inimitable sound-world that has since become widely associated with the traditional American experience. The finale of the work extensively used the Shaker melody known as "Simple Gifts," but Copland brilliantly wrapped the folk song in his own original voice, transforming the familiar music into something significantly more profound.

The ballet was premièred by Graham and her company at Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., on October 30, 1944. In order to accommodate the limited performance space of the venue, the original score was written for only thirteen players. The year following the successful première, Copland crafted a concert suite using eight of the most memorable musical episodes from the ballet and expanded the work for full symphony orchestra. He also authorized the original orchestration of the work to be performed with an expanded string section. Although the musical material is identical in Copland's two settings of the ballet suite, the more transparent original orchestration offers an intimate charm that sets it apart from the later realization for full orchestra.

*Appalachian Spring* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music the year following its première and was the Music Critics Circle of New York's choice for the outstanding theatrical work of the 1944–45 season. Graham said she wanted the ballet to be like "a legend of American living, like a bone structure, the inner frame that holds together a people." With *Appalachian Spring*, Copland succeeded in both creating a work worthy of this ideal and firmly cementing his reputation as the undisputed "Dean of American Music."

### **"Hoe Down" from *Rodeo* (1942)**

Aaron Copland (1900–90)

Prior to his work on the ballet *Appalachian Spring* with Martha Graham, Aaron Copland was commissioned, along with choreographer Agnes de Mille, by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo to create a ballet about the American West for its 1942–43 season. The result was *Rodeo: The Courting at Burnt Ranch*, which received its debut performance in October 1942 at The Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Copland later extracted four movements to form an orchestral suite that became a cornerstone of the American symphonic repertoire.

The thematic material for the final movement of the suite, "Hoe Down," came from the square dance song "Bonyparte." Characterized by a brisk tempo and jaunty rhythms, the music evokes the feeling of carefree celebration at the end of a long, laborious season. After a false ending, the musicians strike up again for one last go around, and the work concludes with an emphatic unison figure. The music features Copland's direct style and open harmonies, which have come to define the adventure, optimism, and freedom of the American West. The version for string orchestra was created by the composer himself.