



Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES  
Sunday, March 2, 2025 at 4:00 P.M.  
First Congregational  
United Christ of Church  
Washington, DC  
GySgt Brandon Eubank, coordinator

Gilbert Vinter (1909–1969)

Elegy and Rondo (1966)

*GySgt Chris Larios and GySgt Robert Bonner, trumpet*  
*GySgt Christopher Reaves, tenor horn*  
*GySgt Hiram Diaz, euphonium*

Alejandro Viñao (b. 1951)

*Book of Grooves* (2011)

A Spanish Groove  
Dance Groove Drifting

*SSgt Alexander Garde and SSgt Jeffrey Grant, marimba*

Verne Reynolds (1926–2011)

Music for Five Trumpets

Fanfare  
Chorale  
Finale

*MSgt Amy McCabe, GySgt Anthony Bellino, GySgt Brandon Eubank,*  
*SSgt James McAloon, Jr., and SSgt Daniel Taubenheim, trumpet*

## INTERMISSION

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

String Quartet No. 6

Mesto; Più mosso, pesante; Vivace  
Mesto; Marcia  
Mesto; Burletta  
Mesto

*GySgt Sara Matayoshi and GySgt Foster Wang, violin*  
*SSgt Rachel Halvorson, viola*  
*GySgt Clayton Vaughn, cello*

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## ***PROGRAM NOTES***

### **Elegy and Rondo (1966)**

Gilbert Vinter (1909–1969)

Gilbert Vinter was an English conductor, bassoonist, and composer, best remembered and celebrated for his brass band compositions. He performed as a member of the London Philharmonic and the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, and he was the first conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra in 1952.

In the British brass band tradition, competition plays a central role, with bands and quartets from different regions, sponsored by different corporations, competing throughout the year for prize money and bragging rights. The “GUS Footwear” Band Quartet were British Quartet Champions from 1966 to 1968, each year premiering a new work by Gilbert Vinter. The first of these was *Elegy and Rondo*, commissioned for the 1966 National Championships. The work is representative of Vinter’s unique style, quickly turning from serious to lighthearted, dramatic to lyrical. Brass band test pieces are written to push the limits of endurance and technique, and as in most competition pieces, each player is featured and tested along with the group as a whole.

### ***Book of Grooves (2011)***

Alejandro Viñao (b. 1951)

The “groove” or “feel” of a piece is understood to consist of a pattern or sequence that repeats periodically in such a way as to create in the listener the desire to move, dance, or foot-tap following the repeated rhythm. A groove is therefore a rhythm “locked” into a pattern of repetition. To “unlock” a groove risks threatening its very existence. In this work I asked myself the following question: to what extent could I unlock a groove without destroying it? How far could I go?

In the piece the various grooves are presented at first in their simple “locked” form, so that the listener may swing with them unequivocally. But gradually, these grooves are “unlocked”; they are subjected to transformations that change the point at which they repeat, the point of inflection. In this way, the shape of each groove is changed and rhythmically developed. At this point the listener may stop feeling the “desire to move” with the groove. If this happens, one could say that the groove has been “killed.” It is a risky compositional strategy: new grooves must be created or “cloned” from the original ones without disturbing the delicate balance that makes the music “groove.” If the piece is successful the listener should be able to follow the process of “unlocking” or changing the original grooves into new ones, without feeling that the grooves have been killed, and experience this as a voyage of transformation. The challenge as I saw it was to preserve the developmental nature of western classical music while at the same time making that process an incessantly grooving one.

*Program note by the composer.*

### **Music for Five Trumpets**

Verne Reynolds (1926–2011)

Verne Reynolds, an American educator, hornist, and composer, started on violin and piano before switching to horn at thirteen. He received degrees from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Wisconsin, and he earned a Fulbright grant to study at the Royal College of Music in London. Reynolds performed with the Cincinnati Symphony and American Woodwind Quintet before becoming principal horn of the Rochester Philharmonic for nine years. His teaching career spanned the Cincinnati Conservatory, the University of Wisconsin, Indiana University, and the Eastman School of Music, where he was a professor for thirty-six years. He was also a founding member of Eastman Brass. While in this group, he began composing for brass quintet and other ensembles, leading to this work, *Music for Five Trumpets*.

This piece explores the trumpet's diverse possibilities, featuring varied articulations, time signatures, accidentals, chromaticism, tempo changes, rhythms, and dynamic contrasts. The first movement, *Fanfare*, begins with lively articulations, setting the stage for a call-and-response within the ensemble, which creates tension through different rhythms and textures. It abruptly ends to make room for the second movement, *Chorale*. This movement starts as a unison duet and gradually adds more voices. It passes the opening melody around the ensemble, showcasing expressiveness and leading to a climax. Tension builds before ending and pushing into the last movement, *Finale*. The third movement returns to the original upbeat energy, featuring a triplet rhythm and solos throughout. Towards the end, unison moments emerge, followed by the theme of fanfares, leading to a dramatic and spirited finish.

### **String Quartet No. 6**

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Hungarian composer Béla Bartók stands as one of the most influential composers of the early twentieth century. His distinctive style masterfully blends elements of folk music, nineteenth-century forms and expressions, and the innovations of twentieth-century tonalities and performance techniques. Among his extensive body of work, Bartók's six string quartets are widely regarded as masterpieces – not only of his output, but of the entire string quartet repertoire. This final quartet, composed in 1939, is perhaps the most sorrowful of the six. Written during a period of profound personal and political turmoil, Bartók was grappling with his growing sense of alienation in Europe as the Nazi Party rose to power while also tending to his ailing mother, who passed away shortly after the quartet's completion.

The quartet begins with a solo viola lament marked *Mesto* (meaning “sad and pensive”), a theme that recurs in each movement, intensifying with every appearance. By the final movement, this *Mesto* theme consumes the entire movement, becoming an unrelenting presence, like a haunting emotion that can no longer be suppressed. Between the appearances of this sorrowful theme, Bartók interweaves contrasting moments that offer temporary relief from this pervasive sadness.

The first movement features playful and quick contrapuntal exchanges, folk-inspired gestures, and biting sarcasm. The second movement, a march, can be interpreted as alluding to the military, with its sharp rhythms and dramatic sound effects such as tremolos, harmonics, and pizzicato. These techniques create a vivid soundscape that alternates between determination, horror, and agitation.

The third movement, *Burletta* (“farce” or “mockery”), contains many gestures that illustrate the title, such as the sardonic glissandos between the violins (sometimes just a quarter

tone apart in pitch), unison eighth-note figures, or ricochet (bouncing the bow) gestures that jump rapidly between players.

The final movement, which could be considered the heart of the quartet, opens with the most dramatic statement of the Mesto theme. It is the first time all four players are invited to play their independent lines as expressively as possible together. As the movement unfolds, fragments of thematic material from the first movement return, now steeped in nostalgia. The music becomes increasingly fragmented, culminating in a final outburst before fading into a whisper – an ending both haunting and inevitable.