



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 7:30 P.M. ET
Streaming at [youtube.com/usmarineband](https://www.youtube.com/usmarineband)
Captain Bryan P. Sherlock, conducting

Carl Vine (b. 1954)

Prologue and Canzona (1985–86)

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)
arranged by Giouri Bessonov

Andante e Rondo Ungarese, Opus 35, J. 79
GySgt Tam Tran, viola soloist

Peter Sculthorpe (1929–2014)

Little Suite for Strings (1983)

Sea Chant
Little Serenade
Left Bank Waltz

George Walker (1922–2018)

Lyric for Strings (1946)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
arranged and edited by James Brown

Charterhouse Suite

Prelude
Slow Dance
Quick Dance
Slow Air
Rondo
Pezzo Ostinato

PROGRAM NOTES

Prologue and Canzona (1985–86)

Carl Vine (b. 1954)

Originally from Perth, Western Australia, Carl Vine began his musical life on cornet at age five, and later piano at age ten. A graduate in composition from the University of Western Australia, he pursued an early interest in the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, resulting in a period of modernism through Vine's thirties. He became one of Australia's best known and most frequently performed composers over the course of his career, writing for everything from solo piano to chamber music to works for film, dance, and theater. Vine is primarily considered a composer of modern art music, but he was commissioned to create a new arrangement of the Australian national anthem and to compose music for the closing ceremonies for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, among other high profile engagements. Vine was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2014, in honor of his distinguished service to the performing arts and for his support and mentoring of emerging performer.

About Prologue and Canzona, the composer wrote:

Canzona was commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra with financial assistance from the Music Board of the Australia Council. The term "Canzona" is used here in its broadest possible sense as a "song for instruments." As the simplest of starting-points then, the chamber orchestra is viewed as a collection of "singing" instruments presented either in melody or in complex counterpoint.

Although cast in a single movement the work falls into two principal sections. The first evolves from a simple melodic movement into a slow waltz-like figure. The second is based on a straightforward chord progression that undergoes a series of convolutions leading to the "presto" finale.

In 1986, choreographer Jacqui Carroll wanted to use Canzona in a new dance work for the Australian Ballet Company. We both felt that it was too short for a one-act ballet, and I wrote Prologue as a "curtain-raiser." The published work now includes Prologue and Canzona.

Andante e Rondo Ungarese, Opus 35, J. 79

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

arranged by Giouri Bessonov

German composer Carl Maria von Weber was trained as a musician from childhood and was first successful as a pianist and then as an orchestral director. Known as the father of German Romanticism, he was among the first significant composers of the Romantic period. Weber composed more than three hundred works including the successful operas *Der Freischütz* (1821), *Euryanthe* (1823), and *Oberon* (1826), of which *Der Freischütz* remains the most popular. He is credited with the development of opera into serious musical drama and for introducing the use of the leitmotif. Musicologist Richard Streatfield said, "Without Weber, [Richard] Wagner would have been impossible." Weber was also a successful composer of

instrumental music. His compositions for piano enjoyed success and greatly influenced later composers such as Franz Liszt, Frédéric Chopin, and Felix Mendelssohn.

Weber wrote the first version of the Andante and Rondo Ungarese in 1809 for his brother, who was a violist. The opening Andante presents a simple theme in the key of C minor with variations following. The first variation is unique in that the solo viola plays an accompaniment role to the violins, who restate the theme. The second variation moves to the relative major key before continuing to the final variation, which showcases the virtuosity of the soloist. The Andante goes *attacca* into the Rondo, which features Hungarian rhythms and styles. The piece builds to brilliant flourishes by the solo violist that triumphantly close the work.

Gunnery Sergeant Tam Tran, viola

Violist Gunnery Sergeant Tam Tran joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Chamber Orchestra in January 2005. He became assistant principal viola in October 2008. Gunnery Sgt. Tran began his musical training at age eight. Upon graduating in 1994 from Appleton High School in Wisconsin, he earned a bachelor’s degree in viola performance from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb in 2000, where he studied with Richard Young of the Vermeer String Quartet. In 2003, Gunnery Sgt. Tran earned a master’s degree in viola performance and chamber music from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he studied with Yitzhak Schotten. He has pursued doctoral studies at the Stony Brook University in New York, studying with Lawrence Dutton of the Emerson String Quartet.

Little Suite for Strings (1983)

Peter Sculthorpe (1929–2014)

Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe is well known for his focus on the landscape of his home continent, as well as on the frailty of the environment and the human condition. For his compositions, he was appointed to both the Order of the British Empire and the Order of Australia and was selected as one of Australia’s Living National Treasures in 1998. Sculthorpe’s output includes solo piano works, eighteen string quartets, two operas, and a variety of instrumental and choral pieces. His film score to the 1980 Australian movie *Maganinni* received the Best Original Music Score award from the Australian Film Institute (now the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts).

The Little Suite for Strings is made up of title themes Sculthorpe wrote for three films in the 1960s. The first movement, Sea Chant, is from the 1963 documentary *The Splendour and the Peaks*; the second movement, Little Serenade, is from the 1968 Australian film *The Age of Consent*, starring Helen Mirren; and the final movement, Left Bank Waltz, comes from the 1962 Tasmanian film *They Found a Cave*. About the suite, Sculthorpe said, “While the three themes are unchanged, in taking them out of their context, I re-harmonized them and made certain additions. Sea Chant, for instance, needed substantial changes, and Little Serenade was originally accompanied by gamelan-like figuration. Furthermore, in choosing the title Left Bank Waltz, I gave the music a somewhat Parisian flavour.” Little Suite for Strings was first performed by the Australian Chamber Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House in 1983.

Lyric for Strings (1946)

George Walker (1922–2018)

George Theophilus Walker was born in Washington, D.C., and was of West Indian-American parentage. His mother supervised her son's first piano lessons that began when he was age five. Walker attended the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, where he graduated at age eighteen with highest honors, before attending the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia to study piano with Rudolf Serkin, William Primrose, Gregor Piatigorsky, and composition with Rosario Scalero, who taught famed composer Samuel Barber. Walker was the first Black graduate of the Curtis Institute, and he went on to become the first Black instrumentalist to appear with the Philadelphia Orchestra, performing Sergei Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto as the winner of the Philadelphia Youth Auditions in 1945. In the same year, he presented his debut solo recital at Town Hall in New York, which was described by the *New York Times* as "notable." Walker received his doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, receiving a Fulbright scholarship and a John Hay Whitney Fellowship, which allowed him to travel to Paris to study composition with the renowned composition instructor Nadia Boulanger for two years.

Walker's compositional output includes more than ninety works for solo instruments, orchestra, and chorus, and his works have been performed by most of the major American orchestras. In 1996, he became the first Black composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Music, awarded for his composition *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*, which was premièred by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Seiji Ozawa.

Lyric for Strings was premièred in 1947 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., by the National Gallery Orchestra. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* described the work as "ambivalent.... The first few notes of the main melody start out suggesting a minor key, and then the theme takes a sunnier turn. It continues to shift back and forth between the two, countervailing forces living side by side. What could be more emblematic of our times? It is undeniably somber and it does grow intense. It lives in the half-shadow of our mourning (to borrow from Edith Wharton). But the ultimate effect is as a balm. It never loses the faith." Walker dedicated the work to his grandmother, who passed away before he completed the piece. He described the piece in the following words: "After a brief introduction, the principal theme is stated by the first violins with imitations appearing in the other instruments. The linear nature of the material alternates with static moments of harmony. After the second of two climaxes, the work concludes with reposeful cadences that were presented earlier."

Charterhouse Suite

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

arranged and edited by James Brown

Perhaps more than any other English composer, the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams is inextricably connected to the rich folk song tradition of his native country. He studied composition and organ at the Royal College of Music in London and earned a doctorate from Cambridge University in 1901. His original style helped to refresh and redefine contemporary English music, and when Sir Edward Elgar died in 1934, Vaughan Williams assumed the role of England's leading composer.

Born into a wealthy family of the English gentry, Vaughan Williams began his education in private schools, but he preferred his time at the public school Charterhouse, where his musical skills were encouraged. It was from this fondly-remembered school that the title *Charterhouse Suite* originated, although the work began its life as a collection of piano miniatures titled *Six Short Pieces for Piano*. Under the supervision of the composer, the set was arranged for string orchestra and published in 1923. Musicologist Robert Cumming offered the following description of the work:

The first piece in the set is Prelude, a lovely, mellow piece, reminiscent at times of the composer's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910). The remaining five sections (Slow Dance; Quick Dance; Slow Air; Rondo; and Pezzo ostinato) carry some of this same atmosphere but also display a mixture of the rural and the regal, the folkish and the gossamer. That the music has a kinship in places (its slow music in particular) with the Tallis *Fantasia* will come as no surprise, since Vaughan Williams had revised that composition in 1919, a year before beginning work on the present piece. While this is not a major effort in the composer's output, it is a pleasant and wholly appealing collection that divulges his less serious colorful side, and is a mainstay of the string orchestra concert repertoire.