



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, March 27, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Philip Sparke (b. 1951)

Divertimento (1985)

SSgt Chris Larios and SSgt Robert Bonner, cornet
SSgt Christopher Reaves, tenor horn
GySgt Hiram Diaz, euphonium

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Introduction and Allegro for
Harp, Flute, Clarinet, and String Quartet

MGySgt Karen Grimsey, harp
GySgt Kara Santos, flute
SSgt Parker Gaims, clarinet
SSgt Sara Matayoshi and SSgt Foster Wang, violin
GySgt Tam Tran, viola
SSgt Clayton Vaughn, cello

Michael Laurello (b. 1981)

Spine (2015)

GySgt Jonathan Bisesi, MSgt Steven Owen,
GySgt Gerald Novak, and SSgt Michael Hopkins, percussion

INTERMISSION

Ruth Gipps (1921–99)

Pan and Apollo, Opus 78 (1992)

GySgt Trevor Mowry and MGySgt Leslye Barrett, oboe
GySgt Joseph DeLuccio, English horn
MGySgt Karen Grimsey, harp

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet, Opus 30

Sehr lebhaft
Sehr langsame Achtel
Deutsche Tänze; Im flatten Ländlertempo
Arioso: Sehr ruhig
Sehr lebhaft, wie im ersten Satz

SSgt Samuel Ross, clarinet
SSgt Ryo Usami and SSgt Foster Wang, violin
GySgt Tam Tran, viola
SSgt Clayton Vaughn, cello

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PROGRAM NOTES

Divertimento (1985)

Philip Sparke (b. 1951)

London-born composer Philip Sparke studied trumpet, piano, and composition at the Royal College of Music. His first major commission was for the Centennial Brass Band Championships in New Zealand, and the subsequent international recognition he received resulted in commissions from ensembles throughout Europe, Asia, Australia, and the United States. Sparke's compositions have earned several awards, including the prestigious Sudler Prize in 1997, and top prizes at the National Band Association Composition Contest in 2005 and 2016.

Sparke's *Divertimento* was a "test piece" commissioned for the 1986 Swiss Solo and Quartet Championship contest. A brass quartet test piece is a short work, usually about eight minutes in duration, composed for a brass band competition. They are written specifically to challenge and showcase the abilities of the ensemble as well as each member of the group. *Divertimento* is one of the most popular and well-known brass quartet competition pieces. Each player shows off flashy techniques as well as beautiful melodies. The first two sections of the work are played without a break, while the final section is an exciting *moto perpetuo* that pushes the technique and endurance of the quartet to its limit.

Introduction and Allegro for Harp, Flute, Clarinet, and String Quartet

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

French composer Maurice Ravel was an important innovator in orchestration, a bold and successful experimenter with musical form, and a sophisticated harmonist. In 1905, he received a commission from the Maison Érard instrument making company to write a piece to showcase their hallmark double-action pedal harp. (Incidentally, this commission came on the heels of a commission by rival harp manufacturing company Pleyel, which in 1904 approached Claude Debussy about creating a work to highlight their own new chromatic action instrument. Their commission produced *Danse sacré et danse profane*, for harp and strings.) Ravel's original composition was for harp, flute, clarinet, and string quartet, and it was dedicated to the director of the Maison Érard, Albert Blondel. Ravel went on to arrange a version for two pianos, and he also gave his blessing for the arrangement of the chamber work for larger ensemble. Oddly enough, despite its popularity, Ravel omitted the composition from his own catalog of works. As a chamber harp concerto, the harp is brought to the fore of the musical texture. The part is not only prominent but fully takes advantage of the capabilities of the instrument with great skill and technical resourcefulness. The première took place in Paris at the Circle Music Hall of the French Photographic Society, with virtuoso harpist Micheline Kahn performing.

***Spine* (2015)**

Michael Laurello (b. 1981)

Michael Laurello is a prolific composer and sound engineer based in Ohio. His 2015 composition *Spine*, for percussion quartet, was commissioned by the Yale Percussion Group. While only four players perform, three of them play up to five instruments during the work, creating a more grandiose feel to this relatively intimate chamber piece. The unrelenting drumming of the Percussion 1 player opens the piece and acts as the backbone of the music as it unfolds and incorporates each player in turn. The constant lilt of the mixed meter rhythms and syncopations creates an unpredictable thrill. Halfway through the work a sudden calm sets in, while the primary melodic content moves to the glockenspiel, and the piano becomes the main driver of the rhythm itself, playing with dampened strings. Once the piano is no longer muted, it works in tandem with the glockenspiel to bring the interplay of the ensemble to a quiet close.

***Pan and Apollo, Opus 78* (1992)**

Ruth Gipps (1921–99)

Ruth Gipps was a prolific composer and performer in twentieth-century England. While perhaps not as well-known as other contemporary composers, her output spanned the chamber, vocal, and symphonic genres. Gipps was a gifted oboist and pianist, but after sustaining an injury in her thirties, her performance career ended, and she turned her attention toward composing and conducting.

Pan and Apollo was written late in Gipps' life. In this musical adaptation of the Greek myth, wind instruments are pitted against strings—in this case, the harp. In the myth, Pan and Apollo are found arguing over whose musical ability is best, and King Midas is called to judge. Pan goes first and holds Midas spellbound with his flute playing. Apollo follows with his harp, but for Midas it is no comparison to Pan. An angry Apollo curses Midas with donkey's ears. This work features an unusual combination of two oboes, English horn, and harp in this musical manifestation of the mythical argument.

Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet, Opus 30

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)

Paul Hindemith was one of the most prolific composers of the twentieth century, writing works for nearly every medium. He became a composition instructor at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik in 1927, by which time his reputation as a successful composer had been well established. With the rise of Adolf Hitler's regime in 1933, Hindemith and his music fell out of favor in his native country. He left Germany and began traveling and performing extensively. Following the outbreak of World War II, Hindemith moved to the United States where he became a professor of composition at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, from 1940 to 1953. During this period, Hindemith continued his prodigious compositional output, became an American citizen, and wrote several books on theory and composition. After the war he began concentrating more on conducting, ultimately leaving Yale to settle in Switzerland. Hindemith died in Frankfurt in 1963.

Although much of his musical output and career were heavily influenced by the two World Wars and the intervening years, Hindemith wrote his Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet earlier in his career. Nonetheless, this work showcases the composer's unique and intellectual conception of music, even at this nascent stage. The Quintet is a relatively brief five-movement work. The opening movement bristles with energy and depth, and Hindemith's penchant for motor-like, rhythmic ensemble music shows brilliantly here. The second movement emerges seamlessly from the first, but establishes a subdued, melancholy character right away. The middle movement is played by the clarinetist on the E-flat soprano clarinet, in a vibrant and humorous scherzo to match the character of the small instrument. The somber fourth movement features a plaintive violin solo with sparse accompaniment and three separate, punctuating long notes in the low range of the clarinet. The fifth and final movement is the exact reverse of the first movement—resulting in a musical palindrome, much like the one Hindemith would create decades later in his Septet.