



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Sunday, April 16, 2023 at 2:00 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

SiHyun Uhm (b. 1999)

Yearning (2022)

world première

Winner of the 2023 Inaugural Marine Band Call for Scores Competition

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, KV. 219, “Turkish”

Allegro aperto

Adagio

Tempo di menuetto

SSgt Ryo Usami, soloist

INTERMISSION

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Symphony No. 2 in D, Opus 43

Allegretto

Tempo andante, ma rubato

Vivacissimo

Finale: Allegro moderato

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PROGRAM NOTES

Yearning (2022)

SiHyun Uhm (b. 1999)

SiHyun Uhm is a composer, arranger, pianist, audio engineer, and multimedia producer currently based in New York. Uhm gained attention after the release of her first album in 2017. She received commissions from the U. S. Air Force Academy Band, YAMAHA, Rice University's Sviatoslav Richter Fund, Columbia Digital Audio Festival, and Five by Five Ensemble. She was a composition fellow with the American Composers Orchestra, Really Spicy Opera, Nashville Symphony Composer Lab, Universal Artists Festival, and Daegu MBC Orchestra. Uhm received prizes for her work from the Arts Council of Korea, National YoungArts, the Korean Wind Ensemble, Future Symphony, and Avalon. Her music was featured at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics and won the Eastman School of Music's Howard Hanson Orchestral Prize.

Uhm earned her bachelor's of music from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. Her teachers include Whitman Brown and Mana Tokuno of the New England Conservatory and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, David Liptak, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and Vincent Lenti of the Eastman School of Music. She is currently pursuing graduate studies at The Juilliard School in New York City.

The composer offers the following about her award-winning work:

Yearning for string orchestra draws an emotional arch. Heart-wrenching to conquering, the piece goes from slow build-ups to sudden build-ups, sometimes satisfyingly reaching the apex and sometimes being unable to reach the top. Towards the middle of the piece, the music stops with Bartok pizzicato, and the theme appears in a higher register with intermittent spaces following the pause.

We all as humans yearn for something, even if that is small or big; Occasionally, the intensified yearning seems to get close to becoming true, but sometimes it meets cold reality; but all we can do is keep wishing and yearning.

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K. 219, "Turkish"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's musical gifts as a performer were as notable as his gifts as a composer. As a child, Mozart was a keyboard prodigy. He travelled and performed constantly during his childhood, dazzling royalty and wealthy patrons of the arts throughout Europe. While his talent as a pianist is well-known, he was an equally talented violinist and violist. Wolfgang's primary teacher was his father Leopold: one of Europe's preeminent violin performers, pedagogues, and scholars. Leopold's "A Treatise of the Fundamentals of Violin Playing," was one of the most highly regarded pedagogical texts of the era. That treatise was written in 1756, the same year as Wolfgang's birth.

At age seventeen, Mozart returned to his hometown of Salzburg to settle down after years of touring and performing. His travels allowed him to meet and hear many of the finest

musicians of the time. Upon his return to Salzburg, Mozart reflected that “[t]here is no stimulus [here] for my talent. When I play or when any of my compositions are performed, it is just as if the audience were all tables and chairs.” In contrast to his cosmopolitan life as a touring wunderkind, Salzburg felt stifling due to its relatively small size and isolation. Furthermore, Hieronymus Colloredo, the new Archbishop of Salzburg, was not a fan of the Mozarts and denied Leopold his expected promotion to *Kapellmeister* of the court. However, Wolfgang needed stable employment and Salzburg’s royal court offered that opportunity. He was officially appointed to a *Konzert-meister* or court composer position of the Salzburg court orchestra in August 1772. In that position he was expected to compose new works for the orchestra and to showcase himself and Antonio Brunetti, the orchestra’s leader, as soloists. To do so, Mozart composed his first violin concerto in 1773 and four others in 1775.

The last of the five violin concerti is the most adventurous, both in form and content. It premiered in December 1775 during the court’s Christmas season. Music critics and historians gave the concerto the nickname, “Turkish,” because of its weaving of *alla turca* elements in its third movement. These so-called “Turkish” musical elements included percussive chords played with wood of the bow; sudden changes of mode; and angular, ornamented melody lines. These musical effects were popular exoticizations of Middle Eastern musical styles at the time. Mozart’s most well-known work in the “Turkish” style is the third movement of the Piano Sonata No. 11, K. 331 known as the “*Rondo alla turca*.”

The Violin Concerto No. 5 assimilates the French and Italian styles of violin playing that Mozart had encountered in his travels, but also diverges from the expected in fascinating ways. These adventures begin immediately. After a dramatic opening for the orchestra, the solo violin enters with a completely different tempo and mood. The musical invention continues through the development of the movement’s main theme before giving way to the second movement: a beautiful *Adagio*. The final *Rondeau* retains the traditional French form and style, save for a sudden shift in key and time signature that transforms the movement into a Turkish-style march. After this surprising episode, the piece defies expectation one last time with a delightful and gentle conclusion.

Staff Sergeant Ryo Usami, soloist

Violinist Staff Sergeant Ryo Usami of Darien, Connecticut, joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Chamber Orchestra in July 2020. Staff Sgt. Usami began his musical instruction at age five. After graduating Darien High School in 2013, he attended the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he studied with Violaine Melancon and earned a bachelor’s degree in music in 2017. In 2019 he earned a master’s of music from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where he studied with Ayano Ninomiya. Other mentors of his include Akiko Silver and Simeon Simeonov. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Staff Sgt. Usami substituted with the San Diego Symphony; Pacific Symphony (Orange County, California); and Boston Pops. He has also freelanced with the Santa Barbara and New West Symphonies, as well as Symphony New Hampshire. His festival appearances include The Orchestra of Americas, the Colorado Music Festival, Pacific Music Festival in Japan, and Aurora Chamber Music Festival in Sweden.

Symphony No. 2 in D, Opus 43

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Jean Sibelius is recognized as one of Finland's national heroes and one of its most renowned artists. Sibelius was born in Hämeenlinna, a small town north of Helsinki, and grew up speaking Swedish. His father was a Swedish-speaking military doctor, raising Sibelius in the urbane and internationally-focused social strata of Swedish-speaking Finns. It is extraordinary that Sibelius became a hero of the Finnish independence movement from this outsider status.

When Sibelius was three years old his father died of typhus, significantly changing his life's trajectory. His mother was left widowed with significant debts, was forced to sell their home, and moved the family in with her mother. Sibelius grew close to his uncle, Pehr Ferdinand Sibelius. Pehr was a violinist and exposed Sibelius to the world of classical music. He gave his nephew his first violin lessons beginning at age ten and continued to encourage Sibelius' career in music and composition throughout his life.

Despite his musical beginnings, Sibelius initially pursued a different professional career. He initially enrolled in the University of Helsinki's law school. He, however, could not resist the call to music and soon transferred to the Helsinki Music Institute. Incidentally, the institution is now known as the Sibelius Academy. He studied there from 1885 to 1889. After his studies he travelled to Berlin and Vienna and lived in and around those cities for the next three years. He became immersed in the German Romantic style epitomized by composers like Richard Strauss, Anton Bruckner, and Richard Wagner.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Sibelius became known for his penchant of combining Continental Romanticism with a sense of Finnish nationalism. These two streams of influence permeate the works he wrote at this time. Sibelius expressed nationalism in his music by celebrating Finnish folklore, purposely eschewing his Finland-Swede roots and linking his music with the Finnish cultural and political independence movement. His most famous orchestral work, *Finlandia*, was composed in this vein. It premiered in 1901 to great public acclaim, and catapulted Sibelius into the national and international musical consciousness.

Shortly after the premiere of *Finlandia*, the Baron Axel Carpelan wrote to Sibelius imploring him to stir his creative energy through travel. Carpelan wrote,

"You have been sitting at home for quite a while, Mr. Sibelius, it is high time for you to travel. You will spend the late autumn and the winter in Italy, a country where one learns cantabile, balance and harmony, plasticity and symmetry of lines, a country where everything is beautiful – even the ugly. You remember what Italy meant for Tchaikovsky's development and for Richard Strauss."

Carpelan found a wealthy donor that allowed Sibelius to retreat to a villa in the mountains near Rapallo, Italy in the winter of 1901. It was here that he began to compose the second symphony, a work that he called "a confession of the soul."

The work struck a chord with its first audiences. The Helsinki Orchestral Society gave its premiere on March 8th, 1902 with the composer conducting. The second symphony was Sibelius's first orchestral work performed after the premiere of *Finlandia*, an explicit ode to his homeland. Because of this chronology, audiences assumed the symphony was inspired by the ongoing Finnish independence movement. It was easy for audiences to find a patriotic message through the symphony's sweep from its opening *pastorale* to its majestic finale. Some went further, dubbing it the "Symphony of Independence." Sibelius, however, was never explicit about his intentions. He denied a program of Finnish protest in the symphony, while other critics

and artists claimed it. Nevertheless, the work was widely celebrated. Finnish composer Sulho Ranta captured its emotional impact for the Finns when he said, "There is something about this music — at least for us — that leads us to ecstasy; almost like a shaman with his magic drum."

This monumental work is cast in four movements. The piece opens with a rolling theme in the woodwinds that is in dialogue with the horns. This opening motif is the foundation for much of the symphony, reflecting the composer's affinity for interconnected ideas. The plaintive second movement's main theme began as vision of the Don Juan legend. While writing in Rapallo, Sibelius wrote:

"Don Juan. I was sitting in the dark in my castle when a stranger entered. I asked who he could be again and again – but there was no answer. I tried to make him laugh but he remained silent. At last the stranger began to sing – then Don Juan knew who it was. It was death."

The famed Finnish conductor and champion of Sibelius' music Robert Kajanus was the chief proponent of a Finnish protest program. He wrote that the second movement "strikes one as the most broken-hearted protest against all the injustice that threatens at the present time to deprive the sun of its light and our flowers of their scent." Kajanus' reading of the second movement is in sharp contrast to the scherzo that follows. The scherzo is marked by its lightning-fast tempo and relentless energy, dramatically interrupted by the first trio's respite. An alarm sounded by trumpet interrupts the trio and signals a return to the scherzo's opening material. The third movement ends with a return to the trio theme which segues without pause to the final movement. The finale steadily builds to an apotheosis: triumphant recollections of the opening movement in the home key of D ringing with heroic fervor.