



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Sunday, April 23 at 2:00 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Flourishes and Meditations: Music of Pith and Passion

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

March, “La Flor de Sevilla”

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

Petals of Fire (2017)

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)
edited by Clark McAlister

Variations on a Romance by Glinka

Kyle Cho, guest oboe soloist

Winner of the 2023 Marine Band Concerto Competition

Michael Gandolfi (b. 1956)

Flourishes and Meditations on a Renaissance Theme (2010–11)

INTERMISSION

James Stephenson (b. 1969)

Wooden Dimes: Ballet for Wind Ensemble (2021)

world première

Georges Bizet (1838–75)
transcribed by Donald Patterson*

“Habanera” from *Carmen*

MSgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano

Florent Schmitt (1870–1958)

Dionysiaques, Opus 62

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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PROGRAM NOTES

March, “La Flor de Sevilla”

John Philip Sousa (1854–1932)

John Philip Sousa composed this lesser-known march upon a request from the organizers of the Ibero-American Exposition. The Exposition was held in Seville in 1929, a city Sousa had an interesting connection to, as it was the birthplace of his father. He dedicated the march to the people of Spain. Although it is unclear if the younger Sousa ever had the opportunity to visit Seville, he nevertheless directed the following Spanish proverb be printed on the sheet music for the first publication of the march: “Quien no ha visto Sevilla no ha visto maravilla,” which translates to “He who has not seen Seville has not seen beauty.”

Petals of Fire (2017)

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

Chinese American composer Zhou Tian seeks inspiration from different cultures and strives to mix them seamlessly into a musically satisfying combination for performers and the audience. His music has been described as “absolutely beautiful...utterly satisfying” (*Fanfare*), “stunning,” and “a prime example of 21st-century global multiculturalism” (the *Cincinnati Enquirer*). Zhou’s works have been performed by leading orchestras and soloists in the United States and abroad, such as Jaap Van Zweden, Yuja Wang, the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. His Concerto for Orchestra was commissioned and recorded by the Cincinnati Symphony and their music director, Louis Langrée, which earned Zhou a GRAMMY Award nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2018. He was also co-commissioned by “The President’s Own” Marine Chamber Orchestra to compose a new flute concerto for Mimi Stillman, and the piece will be released in its debut recording later this year. Zhou came of age in a new China marked by economic reforms and was in the United States by his nineteenth birthday. Trained at the Curtis Institute of Music, Juilliard School, and University of Southern California, he studied with Jennifer Higdon and Christopher Rouse. He is currently associate professor of composition at Michigan State University. The composer offers the following about his composition.

Petals of Fire is a fierce and colorful rhapsody inspired by American artist Cy Twombly’s 1989 painting of the same title. Part of the work was adapted from a movement of my Concerto for Orchestra. I’ve always been interested in learning how artists mix different styles and techniques to create a unique, new look. Inspired by Twombly’s attempt to combine text and color to express himself visually (literally, words are part of his painting, much like what Chinese painters did during the Song dynasty), I, as a composer, wanted to create a fusion of musical styles, harmony, and timbre, using a large wind ensemble. In a way, everyone in the ensemble is a “petal”: together, the fire glows, disappears, and dances. *Petals of Fire* was commissioned by Michigan State University Wind Symphony and Kevin Sedatole, Director of Bands, on the occasion of the ensemble’s performance at the 2017 College Band Directors National Association national convention.

Variations on a Romance by Glinka

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)

edited by Clark McAlister

Among the great Russian romantic composers, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov is perhaps one of the most fascinating. While his musical journey was rather circuitous, the enduring popularity of his compositions leave no doubt as to the depth of his talent. As a teenager he was taken under the wing of Mily Balakirev along with the aspiring young composers Modest Mussorgsky and César Cui. Rimsky-Korsakov's musical studies were initially encouraged, but then discontinued by his older brother Voin, who pushed Nicolai toward a military career. He served as an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy and in 1862 sailed to the United States with ports of call in New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. Rimsky-Korsakov's musical life could not be suppressed, however, and upon his return to Russia, he continued to compose and was eventually offered a position at the St. Petersburg Conservatory to teach practical composition and orchestration. He would go on to compose a vast collection of works including ballets, operas, and great symphonic works that have entered the canon, like *Scheherazade* and *Capriccio espagnol*. He also became an important teacher to many significant composers and was a pioneer in collecting and setting of traditional Russian folk songs. These melodies provided him with source material for many of his original works and were very influential to subsequent generations of Russian composers, including one of his pupils, Igor Stravinsky.

Following his military service, Rimsky-Korsakov served as Inspector of the Imperial Russian Naval Bands and composed three original pieces for solo instruments and military band around this time. *Variations on a Romance by Glinka* is the second of these three special works, and it features a solo oboe against the backdrop of a wind ensemble. Composed in 1878, the piece opens with a delicate and poignant theme by Mikhail Glinka (whose music heavily influenced Rimsky-Korsakov), followed by twelve variations and a finale. As a largely self-taught composer, Rimsky-Korsakov made a habit of perpetually seeking opportunities to learn, and he acknowledged in his memoirs that writing a piece like this was not so much a direct result of musical inspiration, but more so "...that I might master the virtuoso style so unfamiliar to me." The theme and variations form allowed Rimsky-Korsakov to fully explore the entire spectrum of the oboe's tonal colors and technical possibilities and served as the perfect vehicle for him to demonstrate his full mastery of instrumental color, even in writing for an ensemble that was largely foreign to him as a composer.

2023 United States Marine Band Concerto Competition Winner

Kyle Cho, oboe

Kyle Cho is a sophomore at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac, Maryland and attends the Juilliard Pre-College in New York. He has played oboe for six years. In 2022, Kyle was the recipient of the Interlochen Frederick Fennell Scholarship and the finalist in the New York Chamber Players Orchestra Concerto Competition. In 2020, he won second place at the Asian American Music Society International Competition and third place in the Young Artist Award Competition in Gaithersburg, Maryland. He also won first place on oboe in the Young Musicians Inspiring Change (YMIC) International Competition in 2019, and second place at the YMIC Metropolitan Music Festival in 2020. Kyle is also a pianist and has won numerous competitions and awards on that instrument as well.

Flourishes and Meditations on a Renaissance Theme (2010–11)

Michael Gandolfi (b. 1956)

American composer Michael Gandolfi's earliest musical involvement was in rock and jazz improvisation as an eight-year-old self-taught guitarist. As his improvisational skills developed, he became increasingly interested in music composition and began formal study in his early teens. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in composition from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, as well as fellowships for study at the Yale Summer School of Music and Art in New Haven, Connecticut, the Composers Conference in Aspen, Colorado, and the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts. The span of his musical investigation is paralleled by his cultural curiosity, resulting in many points of contact between the world of music and other disciplines including science, film, and theater. Gandolfi has received commissions from the Atlanta Symphony, the Fromm Foundation, Boston Musica Viva, Speculum Musicae, and the Koussevitzky Foundation, among many others. In addition to fulfilling commissions, Gandolfi is currently the chair of the composition department at the New England Conservatory of Music and is a faculty member of the Tanglewood Music Center. *Flourishes and Meditations on a Renaissance Theme* was commissioned in 2010 by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. It received its première performance at the 2011 convention of the American Bandmasters Association in Norfolk, Virginia. The following is an excerpt from the 2011 album notes, written by the composer.

Flourishes and Meditations on a Renaissance Theme is a set of seven variations on an anonymous Renaissance melody that is simply titled *Spagnoletta*. It is derived from a popular melody titled *Españoleta* or "Little Spanish Tune." I first knew this melody as quoted by Joaquín Rodrigo in his *Fantasia para un gentilhombre* for guitar and orchestra. I also found this tune in the 1970s in a collection of Renaissance songs for classical guitar, and I have played it in that form countless times over the years. I was motivated to probe this elegant tune with which I have been acquainted for four decades, with the expectation that it would prompt a wealth of ideas unique to such a longstanding relationship. The beauty and elegance of the original tune resides in its simplicity, so I chose to present it at the outset of the piece in a clear and streamlined orchestration.

While composing this piece, I experienced a wealth of rich emotions, among which were great joy and deep satisfaction in writing for "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, the quintessential concert band of our time. I cannot overstate the significance of being called upon by this magnificent assembly of dedicated and supremely skilled musicians. It was also profoundly moving to connect, over several centuries, to the composer of *Spagnoletta*; a kindred spirit in the love of music making.

Wooden Dimes: Ballet for Wind Ensemble (2021)

James Stephenson (b. 1969)

world première

James Stephenson came late to his full-time composition career, after performing seventeen seasons as a trumpeter in the Naples Philharmonic in Florida. Stephenson is largely self-taught, making his voice truly individual. His catalog now boasts concertos and sonatas for nearly every instrument, earning him the moniker "The Concerto King" from Chicago Symphony clarinetist John Yeh. Many of those compositions were commissioned by symphony principal players, in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Dallas, among others.

Stephenson's major break came from the Minnesota Commissioning Club, which led to two violin concertos receiving premières in 2012; by Jennifer Frautschi with the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä, and by Alex Kerr with the Rhode Island Philharmonic under Larry Rachleff. Other international soloists for whom Stephenson has composed include saxophonist Branford Marsalis and trumpeter Rex Richardson. Stephenson has since been commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Riccardo Muti, the St. Louis Symphony, and the San Francisco Ballet, as well as multiple times by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. The Marine Band premiered his Second Symphony in 2016 at the prestigious Midwest Clinic and subsequently recorded the piece.

Stephenson is also a highly sought-after arranger and conductor. His arrangements have been performed, recorded, and broadcast by many orchestras in the country, including the Boston Pops Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, and the New York Pops. His conducting debut was with the Chattanooga Symphony in Tennessee in 2016. Since then, Stephenson has led orchestras in Bozeman, Montana; Charleston, South Carolina; Fort Myers, Florida; Modesto, California; and Wyoming, in addition to numerous concert bands. With the Lake Forest Symphony, near his Illinois home, he has conducted and served as composer-in-residence.

Wooden Dimes is Stephenson's first ballet and was composed for the San Francisco Ballet. The original ballet was choreographed by Danielle Rowe; it is the tale of a stage performer, Betty, and her beloved, Robert, from the early part of the last century. The title *Wooden Dimes* is taken from a popular saying from the 1920s: "Don't take any wooden dimes," meaning "Don't be naïve or don't be fooled." Betty and Robert have a love that they believe to be enduring, but situations, circumstances, and their evolution as people inevitably change their relationship; it ends up being nothing like they predicted.

In his evocative and creative score for the ballet, Stephenson channels the musical spirit of the 1920s and the aura of the golden age of stage performers. Combining classical popular dances and styles of the time like a Charleston and ragtime, the composer also harkens back to even earlier dance traditional forms, with episodes inspired by Gavottes and Tarantellas. Several leitmotifs also provide a thread through the ballet and are developed and transformed as the story unfolds, representing the characters' personalities, their relationship to each other, and the misty surroundings of this unique period in history.

Once the original score for the ballet was completed, Colonel Jason K. Fettig and "The President's Own" United States Marine Band commissioned the composer to create a concert suite for wind ensemble that would capture the most essential musical moments from the ballet while still preserving the arc of love, loss, and the price of success and fame. The Marine Band recorded this transcription, and it is featured on the 2022 *Monuments* album, available for free download on the Marine Band website.

"Habanera" from *Carmen*

Georges Bizet (1838–75)

arranged by Donald Patterson*

MSgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano

French composer Georges Bizet's career was plagued by setbacks and disappointment. He composed approximately thirty operas that met with little commercial success, and only six survive in a performable format. Even his greatest achievement, *Carmen*, was received in 1875 with puzzlement by the public because of its risqué content and frank characterizations. Bizet

died believing it was a failure. *Carmen* only posthumously achieved its place as one of the most popular and beloved operas ever written. Originally, Bizet believed that he had based the aria “Habanera” on an authentic folk tune, but he later discovered that it was a composition by Spanish composer Sebastián de Iradier, a contemporary of Bizet’s, who had published “El arreglito” in 1864 as part of the *Fleurs d’Espagne* song collection. Bizet noted the source in the vocal score. Bizet’s version “Habenera” has since earned a place as one of the most recognizable and ubiquitous arias in the entire operatic repertoire.

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,
Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle,
S'il lui convient de refuser.
Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière,
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait;
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère
Il n'a rien dit; mais il me plaît.
L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

Love is a rebellious bird
That nothing can tame,
And it is simply in vain to call it
If it is convenient for it to refuse.
Nothing will work, threat or pleading,
One speaks, the other stays quiet;
And it's the other that I prefer
He said nothing; but he pleases me.
Love! Love! Love! Love!

L'amour est enfant de Bohême,
Il n'a jamais, jamais connu de loi,
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!
Si tu ne m'aime pas,
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime!
Mais, si je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!
Si tu ne m'aime pas,
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime!
Mais, si je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!

Love is the child of the Bohemian,
It has never, never known any law,
If you don't love me, I love you,
If I love you, keep guard of yourself!
If you don't love me,
If you don't love me, I love you!
But, if I love you,
If I love you, keep guard of yourself!
If you don't love me,
If you don't love me, I love you!
But, if I love you,
If I love you, keep guard of yourself!

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre
Battit de l'aile et s'envola;
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre;
Tu ne l'attends plus, il est là!
Tout autour de toi vite, vite,
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient!
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite;
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient!
L'amour, l'amour, l'amour, l'amour!

The bird you thought to surprise
Bat its wing and flew away;
Love is far away, you can wait for it;
If you wait for it no more, it is there!
All around you, quickly, quickly,
It comes, goes, then it comes back!
You think to hold it, it avoids you;
You think to avoid it, it holds you!
Love, love, love, love!

L'amour est enfant de Bohême,
Il n'a jamais, jamais connu de loi,
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime,

Love is the child of the Bohemian,
It has never, never known any law,
If you don't love me, I love you,
If I love you, keep guard of yourself!
If you don't love me, I love you,

Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!
Si tu ne m'aime pas,
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime!
Mais, si je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!
Si tu ne m'aime pas,
Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime!
Mais, si je t'aime,
Si je t'aime, prend garde à toi!

If I love you, keep guard of yourself!
If you don't love me,
If you don't love me, I love you!
But, if I love you,
If I love you, keep guard of yourself!
If you don't love me,
If you don't love me, I love you!
But, if I love you,
If I love you, keep guard of yourself!

English translation by Lea Frey from the Aria Database (<http://www.aria-database.com>)

Master Sergeant Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano vocalist and concert moderator Master Sergeant Sara Sheffield joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in May 2005, becoming the first featured female vocal soloist in Marine Band history. Master Sgt. Sheffield began her musical instruction on piano at age nine and voice at age sixteen. After graduating from Jacksonville (Texas) High School in 1997, she attended the University of North Texas in Denton and earned a bachelor’s degree in vocal performance in 2001. In 2016 she earned an executive master’s degree in business administration from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Master Sgt. Sheffield was a member of the U.S. Army Band’s Army Chorale at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia.

Dionysiaques, Opus 62

Florent Schmitt (1870–1958)

Recognized as a pioneer during his lifetime, Florent Schmitt presented a dynamic musical voice during the first half of the twentieth century, combining his native French clarity with a Germanic strength. Schmitt was born in Meurthe-et-Moselle and entered the Paris Conservatory at age nineteen. The following year, in 1900, he won the prestigious Prix de Rome, which served as a launching pad for his success in the following decades. Despite his provocative personal and political views, his musical talent was widely recognized. Schmitt also served as a music critic and was known to occasionally express his views loudly from his seat in the middle of the concerts he was reviewing. The music publisher Heugel once called him “an irresponsible lunatic.” His early support for the Nazi party also drew significant scrutiny during the 1930s. Despite being a divisive figure, Schmitt remained one of the most often performed and innovative French composers during the first half of the twentieth century. Even when his works fell somewhat out of favor toward the end of his life, he composed voraciously to the end, venturing into most genres of the time, save for opera. He died at the age of eighty-seven in Neuilly-sur-Seine.

Schmitt’s tone poem for symphonic band *Dionysiaques* was composed in 1914, soon after the première of Igor Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*. The mutual admiration of these two composers is evident in the dedication of Schmitt’s 1910 version of his ballet *Salomé* to Stravinsky, who expressed his great excitement about the piece while composing the *Rite of*

Spring. The influence of Stravinsky's primal ballet, in turn, can be heard in Schmitt's *Dionysiaques*. The première of *Dionysiaques* was delayed due to World War I but was performed in 1925 by the Garde Republicaine Band of Paris. The French title refers to the orgiastic celebrations of Dionysus, Greek god of wine and ecstasy. The piece opens with a foreboding gesture in the low instruments, setting an eerily lethargic stage for the impending debauchery. When the dancing begins, wild gestures and frequent changes in the music's pacing reveal the mercurial nature of the revelers. The rhythmically driven music is interrupted by more sensual moments to create a complete picture of the Dionysian spirit.