



CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, April 27, 2025 at 2:00 P.M.
First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Washington, DC
GySgt Lewis Gilmore, coordinator

Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

New York Counterpoint (1985)

Fast
Slow
Fast

*MSgt William Bernier, MSgt Harry Ong, GySgt Zachary Gauvain, GySgt Lewis Gilmore, GySgt Samuel Ross, GySgt Jonathon Troy, SSgt Tyler Hsieh, SSgt Jakob Lenhardt, and SSgt Angelo Quail, B-flat clarinet
GySgt Andrew Dees and GySgt Shannon Kiewitt, bass clarinet*

SSgt Elena Specht*

Fresh (2020)

*MSgt Ellen Dooley, flute
GySgt Parker Gaims, clarinet
GySgt Kristin Bowers, bass clarinet
SSgt Connor Mikula, alto saxophone
GySgt Michael Hopkins, percussion
MSgt Russell Wilson, piano*

Jan Koetsier (1911–2006)

Brass Symphony, Opus 80 (1979)

Allegro
Larghetto
Rondo: Presto

*MSgt Amy McCabe, GySgt Robert Bonner, SSgt William Berue, and SSgt James McAloon, Jr., trumpet
SSgt Joseph Cradler, horn
GySgt Russell Sharp, SSgt Katie Franke, and SSgt Lukas Helsel, trombone
GySgt Daniel Brady, bass trombone
SSgt Benjamin St. Pierre, tuba*

INTERMISSION

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

un(ravel)ed (2019)

SSgt Christina Hughes, flute

SSgt Jakob Lenhardt, clarinet

GySgt Foster Wang, violin

GySgt Clayton Vaughn, cello

MSgt Russell Wilson, piano

SSgt Bradley Loudis, percussion

Ernst von Dohnányi (1877–1960)

Sextet in C, Opus 37

Allegro appassionato

Intermezzo: Adagio

Allegro con sentimento

Finale: Allegro vivace, giocoso

GySgt Lewis Gilmore, clarinet

GySgt Brigitte Knox, horn

SSgt Dominic Muzzi, piano

GySgt Sara Matayoshi, violin

MSgt Tam Tran, viola

GySgt Clayton Vaughn, cello

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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PROGRAM NOTES

New York Counterpoint (1985)

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

The composer writes the following regarding this work

New York Counterpoint is in three movements: fast, slow, fast, played one after the other without pause. The change of tempo is abrupt and in the simple relation of 1:2. The piece is in the meter $3/2 = 6/4 (=12/8)$. As is often the case when I write in this meter, there is an ambiguity between whether one hears measures of three groups of four eighth notes, or four groups of three eighth notes. In the last movement of *New York Counterpoint* the bass clarinets function to accent first one and then the other of these possibilities, while the upper clarinets essentially do not change. The effect, by change of accent, is to vary the perception of that which in fact is not changing

Reich intentionally writes metric ambiguity into the piece. Larger rhythmic units feel as if they are slowly shifting and melt into each large pulse. Meter is barely detectable in the first movement, obscured by repeated notes that are all played at the same eighth note tempo. The second movement begins playing with the groupings of eighth notes. Reich changes which beats are strong and weak, causing the audience to continually second-guess their own sense of time. The final movement puts this ambiguity into stark relief. The bass clarinets play interlocking melodies that accent different beats, alternating between groups of four and three eighth notes.

When listening to this work, these changes happen with nearly imperceptible transitions. One does not notice almost any changes until the texture of the work has completely changed. Reich, like other American minimalist composers, capitalizes on this compositional technique. It forces the listener to challenge their usual tendency to focus on a particular melody or a single instrument's part. *New York Counterpoint* invites the listener to get lost in a mesmerizing aural soundscape created by the chorus of eleven clarinets. In this style, changes in timbre have the strongest emotional impact, rather than harmonic or melodic resolution.

The composer offers a musician two options when performing this piece: either by a soloist accompanied by recorded additional parts or with all eleven parts performed live.

Fresh (2020)

SSgt Elena Specht*

The composer writes the following regarding the work:

Fresh is inspired by Lake Michigan, both its natural properties and its meaning in my life. As a part of the Great Lakes, Lake Michigan is one of the world's largest bodies of fresh water, making it a life-giving source unlike the oceans. In my own life, Lake Michigan has been a place of fresh starts and hopefulness. I was born in Evanston, an Illinois city that borders the lake, and years later began getting to know my future husband on walks along Lake Michigan's shore. Last summer, when I was missing my former home in Colorado after having recently moved to Michigan, I watched my dog splash and play in the water, and I felt a fresh sense of encouragement and purpose living in Michigan. *Fresh* captures the hopefulness of each of these moments with bright colors,

boundless energy, and exhilarating joy. Fresh was commissioned by the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble.

Brass Symphony, Opus 80 (1979)

Jan Koetsier (1911–2006)

Jan Koetsier was born in Amsterdam, but in 1913 his family moved to Berlin where he began studying the piano at an early age. At age sixteen, Koetsier was the youngest student at the time to pass the entrance audition on piano at the Berlin *Hochschule* for Music. There he studied piano, score-reading, theory, and conducting. He spent his early professional career as a conductor and arranger at a short-wave radio station in Berlin, conducting broadcasts of his own folk music arrangements. Due to the changing political situation in Germany, he moved back to his homeland in the Netherlands and held conducting posts with the *Kammeropera* in the Hague as well as the assistant conductor position with the Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1942 to 1948. Koetsier became a conductor for the recently formed Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in 1950, a position he held for the next sixteen years. He became professor of conducting in 1966 at the Munich *Hochschule* for Music. After his retirement, Koetsier concentrated mainly on composing and in 1993 founded the Jan Koetsier International Competition for the encouragement of young brass ensembles. He has composed pieces for the Phillip Jones Brass Ensemble, Brass *Philharmonie*, and the Leipzig *Hornquartett*, as well as many string soloists and pianists.

The Brass Symphony opens with a unison trumpet fanfare that develops in various short lines which whimsically layered in a fast-moving setting. The first movement's second theme is first introduced by a solo horn. It is a more lyrical theme which weaves through the fanfare motives. The second movement is cast in a more somber mood that is reminiscent of the blues. Big band sounds may be heard at times in this broadly sweeping and lyrical Larghetto. The movement culminates in a climatic *radioso* passage. The final movement, Rondo, is reminiscent of a carnival with its fast, triple meter passages that banter back and forth between the trumpets and trombone. The solo horn soars over the ensemble with highly rhythmic and energetic lines. The piece ends with a recapitulation of the trumpet fanfares from the opening movement, juxtaposed with scherzando melodies of the last movement.

***un(ravel)ed* (2019)**

Kevin Day (b. 1996)

Kevin Day is an American composer, jazz-pianist, and conductor born in Arlington, Texas and currently resides in San Diego, California. He is an award-winning composer known for his vibrant exploration of diverse musical traditions from contemporary classical, jazz, R&B, soul and more.

Day writes the following about this piece:

un(ravel)ed is the result of me wanting to try new things and apply new techniques that I had not used previously. It features some post-minimalist elements, while also showcasing more pointillistic and lyrical writing. This work deals with the concept of different sounds or melodic ideas swirling in and out of each other, becoming woven and

unwoven to create a beautiful tapestry. The name 'Ravel' is in parenthesis because this composition is reminiscent of and inspired by composer Maurice Ravel's String Quartet.

Sextet in C, Opus 37 Ernst von Dohnányi (1877–1960)

Ernst von Dohnányi, or Dohnányi Ernő in his native Hungarian, was born in Pozsony, Kingdom of Hungary, now known as Bratislava, Slovakia. He began learning music at an early age before moving to Budapest to attend the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music. There he studied piano with István Thomán and composition with Hans von Koessler, students of Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms, respectively. Dohnányi graduated from the academy before age twenty in three years. He made his name as a pianist first, traveling the world as a renowned soloist. This included a tour of the United States in 1898, where he made his American debut with the St. Louis Symphony. Three years later, Dohnányi published his Symphony No. 1. On his return to Europe, he taught at the *Hochschule* in Berlin for ten years. With the outbreak of World War I, Dohnányi moved back to Budapest to lead the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music and the Budapest Philharmonic. During this period Dohnányi was a staunch supporter of Hungarian music, especially the work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. During his leadership of the Philharmonic, he defended Jewish musicians from dismissal as Germany occupied Hungary. Eventually, he resigned from his post at the Academy rather than submitting to anti-Jewish legislation and disbanded the Philharmonic during the German occupation. After World War II, Dohnányi emigrated to the United States to teach at Florida State University and became a citizen in 1955. He would continue to teach there until his death in 1960. His final public performance was conducting the university orchestra in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, the same piece with which he had made his American debut at the piano in St. Louis sixty-two years earlier.

Dohnányi's Sextet was composed and premiered in 1935. It is written for a unique combination of instruments: the established piano quintet augmented with clarinet and horn. The use of these instruments both all together and as small subgroups, is presented so naturally that one wishes this was a more popular ensemble. Reflecting the curious instrumentation of the work, Dohnányi employs a curious reimagining of traditional Western forms.

The first movement begins with a forceful and triumphant statement from the horn. That theme's solidity and strength continues throughout the movement. The first movement sharply contrasts with the dreamscape-like opening of the second movement. That serenity is quickly shattered by a march that transforms most of the movement into a nightmare before drifting back into the more pleasant dream. The third movement starts with a folk-like melody in the clarinet: the theme for a set of frenetic variations that build to a restatement of the first movement's primary theme. This move straight into the finale: a joyous mix of popular genres from the early twentieth century.

Through the work Dohnányi is relentlessly original in his melodies, delightedly inserting folk idioms throughout the piece and jazz in the finale. He nods to the German Romantic tradition throughout the sextet evoking the music of Mahler, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. This combined with a distinct Hungarian flair makes the work both creative and reassuringly familiar at the same time.