



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.  
Streaming at [youtube.com/usmarineband](https://www.youtube.com/usmarineband)  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

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### Springtime Serenade

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Clarinet Concerto in A, K. 622

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo: Allegro

*GySgt Harry Ong, soloist*

Victor Herbert (1859–1924)

Serenade for String Orchestra, Opus 12

Aufzug

Polonaise

Liebes-Scene

Canzonetta

Finale

# ***PROGRAM NOTES***

## **Clarinet Concerto in A, K. 622** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)

One of the last compositions of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's short but brilliantly creative life was his Clarinet Concerto. The work was written for his friend and fellow Freemason, clarinetist Anton Stadler, and was inspired by Mozart's deep appreciation for the relatively new instrument and its rich, dark tone and lyrical capabilities. By the time of the concerto's composition, Mozart had already had included clarinet parts in some of his symphonies and operas, including his final opera *The Magic Flute*, which was written just before the concerto and shares some of the same musical DNA. He had also composed music for the clarinet's lower-pitched cousin, the basset horn, and it was really the basset horn that Mozart originally had in mind when he conceived of this concerto.

The earliest autograph manuscript of the Clarinet Concerto dates from 1789 and is a fragmentary sketch of the first movement in the key of G rather than A. In 1791, Mozart reworked the sketches into the concerto as it is known today for a specially-constructed instrument that Stadler frequently used. Now referred to as the basset clarinet, the instrument was similar to a standard A clarinet with added additional tubing and several extra keys, extending its range lower by a major third. By the time of publication of the Clarinet Concerto in 1801—ten years after Mozart's death—many alterations already had been made to the music in order for the concerto to be performed on the standard clarinet.

The concerto remains among the most significant works ever written for the clarinet, and it represents the pinnacle of the Classical concerto form. Cast in the traditional three movements, the substantial first movement is in sonata form and highlights the dramatic contrasts in the range of the clarinet, from the high, vibrant *altissimo* to the characteristic low and warm *chalameau* register. The lyrical central movement is among the most beautiful music Mozart ever composed in his many masterful works, and the concerto concludes with joyful and virtuosic Rondo in 6/8 time.

### **Gunnery Sergeant Harry Ong, clarinet**

Clarinetist Gunnery Sergeant Harry Ong joined the "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in September 2003. Gunnery Sgt. Ong began his musical training at age nine. He attended Roosevelt High School in Seattle for three years and graduated from the Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan, in 1999. He attended the University of Michigan (U-M) in Ann Arbor, where he received a bachelor's degree in 2003. He has studied with Fred Ormand of U-M, and Richard Hawkins and Dan Silver at the Interlochen Center for the Arts. Gunnery Sgt. Ong performed Artie Shaw's Clarinet Concerto as a 2009 tour soloist and again in 2010 at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts' Summer Blast Off! concert at the Filene Center in Virginia. Prior to joining "The President's Own," he performed with the U-M Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Band, and Contemporary Directions Ensemble; the Seattle Youth Symphony; and the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra in Los Angeles.

## Serenade for String Orchestra, Opus 12

Victor Herbert (1859–1924)

Victor Herbert was born in Ireland and received his musical instruction in Germany, but he spent the majority of his life in America, eventually attaining U.S. citizenship. At age seven, Herbert moved with his mother to Stuttgart, Germany, where he began his musical training. Although he also played piano, flute, and piccolo, he chose to become a serious student of cello and attended the Stuttgart Conservatory, earning his diploma in 1879. Herbert developed into a first-rate cellist, performing in several prominent orchestras in Europe and serving as soloist with the Eduard Strauss Orchestra in Vienna for a time. In 1886 Herbert married Therese Foerster, a celebrated Viennese opera singer, and the two moved to New York City, where she was engaged to sing at the Metropolitan Opera. Herbert soon became the principal cellist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and was befriended by the eminent conductor Anton Seidl. Seidl encouraged the young man's talents as both a composer and conductor, and Herbert served as assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic for the popular summer concerts at Brighton Beach, near Coney Island and Manhattan Beach. Herbert honed his deft programming skill during these seasons with the New York Philharmonic, intermingling serious concert repertoire with lighter popular works. It was a formula he perfected during his lifetime, and which became the model for today's orchestral pops programming. Herbert's conducting career continued to flourish as he led a variety of ensembles. In 1893 he became the leader of the Patrick S. Gilmore Band and toured extensively for the next seven years, often adapting his orchestral works for band himself. In 1898, he was offered the music directorship of the Pittsburgh Symphony and held that position for six years before leaving to form his own ensemble, the Victor Herbert Orchestra.

During his prominent career as a cellist and conductor, Herbert found equal success as a composer, especially in the world of operetta and musical theater. He composed his first operetta in 1894, and went on to compose more than forty, along with two grand operas, dozens of orchestral and band works, and even an early film score for the 1916 silent drama *The Fall of a Nation*. Herbert is perhaps best remembered today for his most successful operetta, *Babes in Toyland*, as well as his superb Cello Concerto No. 2, which was premièred in 1894 with the composer as the soloist and Seidl conducting the New York Philharmonic. Herbert was also one of the founders of the organization known today as the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), established to protect the rights and property of creative artists in 1914, and he served as its president until his death in 1924.

Herbert's *Serenade for String Orchestra* was composed in 1884 while he was still in Germany, but the piece was not premièred until 1888, two years after the composer's arrival in America. It was first performed by the New York Philharmonic with the composer conducting at the invitation of Seidl. The musical language of this work was entirely in concert with Herbert's evolving identity at the time of his move to America. Bearing German movement titles and markings, the composition was largely rooted in the traditional European serenade form and vernacular that revealed the composer's German musical training. However, that serious tone is conflated with the lighter touch that came to define Herbert's writing in his operettas and the popular music he composed in the New World. The five movements alternate cheerful musical jaunts and dances with slower, more serious episodes, including the central *Liebes-Szene* (Love Scene), which is the emotional heart of the work. The *Serenade for String Orchestra* served as Herbert's unofficial introduction to his new musical life in America, and the piece was met with critical acclaim. Despite the many other compositions to come from his pen in the ensuing decades of his life, Herbert returned often to the *Serenade*, and it stands as a wonderful chapter in the fascinating evolution of the string serenade genre during the nineteenth century.