



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.
Streaming at [youtube.com/usmarineband](https://www.youtube.com/usmarineband)
Captain Bryan P. Sherlock, conducting

Gordon Jacob (1895–1984)

Old Wine in New Bottles

The Wraggle Taggle Gipsies
The Three Ravens
Begone, dull care
Early one morning

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974)

La Création du monde, Opus 81a

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)
arranged by Alfred Reed
edited by Don McCathren

Concertino for Clarinet, Opus 26

Aaron Lipsky, guest soloist

Winner of the 2020 Marine Band

Concerto Competition for High School Musicians

Robert Kurka (1921–57)

The Good Soldier Schweik Suite, Opus 22

Overture
Lament
March
War Dance
Pastoral
Finale

PROGRAM NOTES

Old Wine in New Bottles

Gordon Jacob (1895–1984)

Gordon Jacob studied with Ralph Vaughn Williams at the Royal College of Music in London. Jacob's compositions seem to fill the gap between the generation of composers such as Vaughn Williams, Gustav Holst and William Walton, and those he later taught at the Royal College of Music, such as Malcolm Arnold and Imogen Holst. Jacob was on the faculty for more than forty years and left a legacy of texts on orchestration and scoring, while his musical output was focused on orchestral and chamber music. He enjoyed early popularity through performances at the BBC Proms, and he became a prominent English composer in the 1950s. Jacob was commissioned to write for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Eventually his more traditional style became eclipsed by the avant-garde movement of the 1960s. His work is known for exquisite craftsmanship, clarity, and directness. Jacob built an audience by writing music for the growing wind band movement, especially in the United States.

Old Wine in New Bottles, which premiered in 1959, was written for the St. Bees Festival of Music in Cumbria, England, at the request of Jacob's friend and the festival's music director, Donald Leggat. It is a suite of four movements based on old English folk songs (the titular "old wine"), treated with the freshness of Jacob's creative melodic turns, ingenious harmonies, and wit. The piece was the greatest success of the festival, according to local news, and is a clear example of Jacob's ample ability and affinity to write for winds.

La Création du monde, Opus 81a (1923)

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974)

Darius Milhaud's name is probably most closely affiliated with "Les Six," a label given by critic Henri Collet in 1919 to a significant collection of French composers including Milhaud and his contemporaries Francis Poulenc, Arthur Honegger, Louis Durey, George Auric, and Germaine Tailleferre. Collet bestowed this title upon them with the hope that they would become a sort of twentieth-century French answer to the Russian "Mighty Five" of Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Mily Balakirev, and César Cui, who had collectively cultivated a strong nationalistic style in their music as the nineteenth century drew to a close. While the names of "Les Six" were only associated for a short time (and their compositional styles even more briefly, if at all), they began using this publicity to get many new works performed. Among the six, Poulenc and Milhaud are credited today as the most significant contributors to what emerged as the predominant French style of the mid-twentieth century.

In 1919, Milhaud embarked on several international trips that had a tremendous impact on his music, most substantially represented in his remarkable 1923 ballet *La Création du monde*. He first traveled to Brazil, and the native syncopated rhythms he heard there began to open new musical doors for Milhaud. However, it was his travels to the United States in the years that followed that solidified his wanderings into uncharted artistic territory. It was in New York City in 1922 where Milhaud was first exposed to authentic American jazz. He was

captivated by the style and visited several jazz clubs in Harlem during his stay. It was also while he was in New York that he heard the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, the same group for whom George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was written. Milhaud was invigorated by the opportunity to meld these fresh musical ideas with the unique compositional style for which he was already known, and a brand new sound was forged in his ballet. Many (justifiably) point to Gershwin's groundbreaking *Rhapsody in Blue* as an early benchmark among experiments in combining the classical and jazz idioms, yet *La Création du monde* preceded it by a year. While Gershwin's opus has had more popular and enduring success, Milhaud clearly beat Gershwin to the punch.

The ballet's original choreography by Jean Borlin seems to be lost to history, however, the scenario by Blaise Cendrars, as well as the sets and costumes of Fernand Leger, have been preserved in both photograph and print. *La Création du monde* was commissioned by wealthy Swedish financier Rolf de Mare and first performed by his troupe, the Ballet Suédois, which were well known at the time for their avant-garde productions. The finished product reflected a French preoccupation with African culture at the time. Milhaud had never been to Africa and perhaps had never even heard traditional African music. The association with the Black influence on the origins of jazz notwithstanding, Cendrars' scenario was born from traditional African folk-myths with Leger's sets and costumes depicting jungles, wild animals, and dancers wearing unwieldy tribal masks, whereas the roots of Milhaud's music were planted in the jazz clubs of New York.

The story contains five sections which are seamlessly woven together by Milhaud's artful scoring and preceded by a mournful overture featuring the unusual inclusion of an alto saxophone in place of the viola among a quartet of solo strings. The curtain opens to reveal the darkness and chaos before the world began (I). The darkness gives way to reveal a few gods dancing and chanting around a rotating mass of unknown origin. Trees, animals, insects, and beasts are gradually conjured from the ambiguous orb, and they all join the chanting and dancing (II) until a man and woman appear and perform a joyous and affectionate dance of coupling (III). Witch-doctors interrupt, performing an increasingly frantic ritual (IV), but the couple's union prevails and all cacophony gradually disappears until the man and woman are united in a springtime embrace (V) as the ballet comes to a close.

Concertino for Clarinet, Op. 22

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

Carl Maria von Weber was a German pianist, composer, conductor, and music critic. His mother was a singer and father was a music director, who planned to make him a child prodigy on violin like the young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Although he was not so successful on violin, Weber was a gifted pianist and had become renowned for his musical talent by the age of four. A few years later, he began his serious study of composition under various teachers, including Michael Haydn, and by the age twelve, he had published six piano fughettas, an opera, a mass, and a series of variations for the piano. When he was fourteen, Weber wrote an opera, *The Silent Forest Maiden*, which reportedly received performances in Vienna, Prague, and Saint Petersburg. Weber was appointed director of the Breslau Opera, in Poland, in 1804 and eventually held posts at the operas of Prague and Berlin. Throughout these posts, he worked to supplant the more prevalent Italian opera style with a more Germanic one. Weber wrote his opera, *Der Freischütz* in 1821, which established him as a German Romantic composer. He

followed that success with the opera, *Euryanthe*, the overture from which is still frequently performed, and which established the practice of *leitmotif* and possibly anticipated the Romantic operas of Richard Wagner. Weber's final opera, *Oberon*, premiered on April 12, 1826, and the successful young composer died shortly after, on June 5, 1826, due to complications from tuberculosis. Interestingly, and a testament to his lasting influence, his eulogy was delivered by none other than his German contemporary, Wagner.

Weber wrote several works, including this one, for his friend Heinrich Baermann, a leading clarinetist of his day and a court musician in Munich. The Concertino, Opus 26, was first performed on April 5, 1811, and was a great success. In addition to Weber's two clarinet concertos, the Concertino remains one of the most popular works of the repertoire.

2019 United States Marine Band Concerto Competition Winner Aaron Lipsky, clarinet

Since its inception in 2008, the United States Marine Band's annual Concerto Competition for High School Musicians has spotlighted a number of our country's brightest young musicians, some of whom have been featured on NPR's *From the Top* program and have gone on to perform with world-class ensembles. The winning student, selected by a rigorous audition process that includes a pre-recorded preliminary round and in-person final performance round for a live audience in Sousa Hall, receives a \$2,500 scholarship courtesy of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, and the opportunity to perform the solo live with "The President's Own." The 2020 Concerto Competition finals were held just prior to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, and it is only now that winner Aaron Lipsky is able to return for his solo appearance with the Marine Band.

A native of Asheville, North Carolina, Lipsky is currently a senior at A. C. Reynolds High School. He started playing clarinet at age eleven in his sixth grade band program, and the following year, he began studying with Steve Loew, a former member of the U.S. Marine Band. In the summers of 2017 and 2018, Lipsky attended the Brevard Music Center (BMC) in North Carolina, where he was the youngest student in 2017 and a BMC Scholar in 2018. He attended the Curtis Institute of Music's Young Artist Program in the summer of 2019 and, in 2020, placed second in the International Clarinet Association's High School Solo Competition. This summer, he is looking forward to performing with the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America.

Lipsky has soloed with the Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra in North Carolina, the Asheville Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Asheville Clarinet Choir. He is also the director of Clarinet & Friends, a chamber music company that he founded in 2018, which produces concerts in venues around the western North Carolina region. He is the grandson of American composer Phillip Rhodes, with whom Lipsky has collaborated on several performances of his music. This fall, Lipsky will begin his freshman year as a Wells Scholar at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he will study with Eli Eban. In his spare time, Lipsky plays basketball, keeps up with current issues in American politics, and plays chess with his father.

The Good Soldier Schweik Suite, Opus 22

Robert Kurka (1921–57)

Trained as a violinist at Columbia University, Robert Kurka was primarily self-taught as a composer, though he did study one summer at the Berkshire Music Center with Darius Milhaud. While maintaining a teaching career at City College of New York and Queens College, he wrote mainly orchestral and chamber music, including two symphonies, five string quartets, and six sonatas. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1951, and a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1952. Subsequently, Kurka began work on an opera based on the satirical anti-war novel by Czech writer Jaroslav Hasek, but had difficulty securing rights for a libretto. He reworked his sketches for *The Good Soldier Schweik* into a suite, which has become his most performed work. Kurka was influenced by the folk music of Czechoslovakia, his parents' homeland. Additionally, his neoclassical style makes use of repeated melodic and energetic rhythmic motifs, and ironic dissonant moments within a predominantly tonal structure, for which it has been favorably compared to music of Kurt Weill. By 1956, Kurka had begun again to expand the suite into the planned opera with a libretto by Abel Meeropol under a pseudonym, but Kurka died of leukemia before it was finished, only ten days before his thirty-sixth birthday. Fortunately, the opera was completed and staged by the New York City Opera in 1958 to great success and remains popular, receiving more than 100 performances throughout the world. The composer wrote the following note regarding his work:

The Suite was inspired by the *The Good Soldier Schweik*, the brilliantly realistic anti-war satire by the Czech novelist and journalist Jaroslav Hasek. Written shortly after the First World War, it is essentially the story of the civilian, the common man, forced to become a soldier who must fight for a cause for which he has no sympathy. Although he is classified by his German masters ("the authorities") as "feeble-minded" (that is, someone who doesn't quite appreciate their reasons for waging war), Schweik is, in reality, crazy like a fox, exposing the arrogance, stupidity and hypocrisy of these "authorities" by his seemingly idiotic behavior. In spite of the indignities to which Schweik is subjected, his optimism manages to emerge indestructible and triumphant. He is, therefore, not only a single individual, but also the symbol of the common people and their resistance to a war to which they can derive no benefit, but only suffering.

Each of the six short pieces which comprise the Suite represents a general idea or theme, rather than any specific episodes. The Overture is a character sketch of Schweik, the good-natured common man. The Lament represents the element of sadness and seriousness which underlies many of the episodes, such as the outbreak of war. The March, of course, represents the soldier's chief means of getting from place to place – Schweik does quite a bit of it. The War Dance represents the "authorities," and their fanatical pounding of the war drum. The Pastoral is an ironic title for a movement which in no way brings to mind a peaceful idyllic scene. Rather, it is heavy and oppressive as it depicts the countryside in time of war. The Finale reveals Schweik's optimism, triumphant and indestructible in the end.